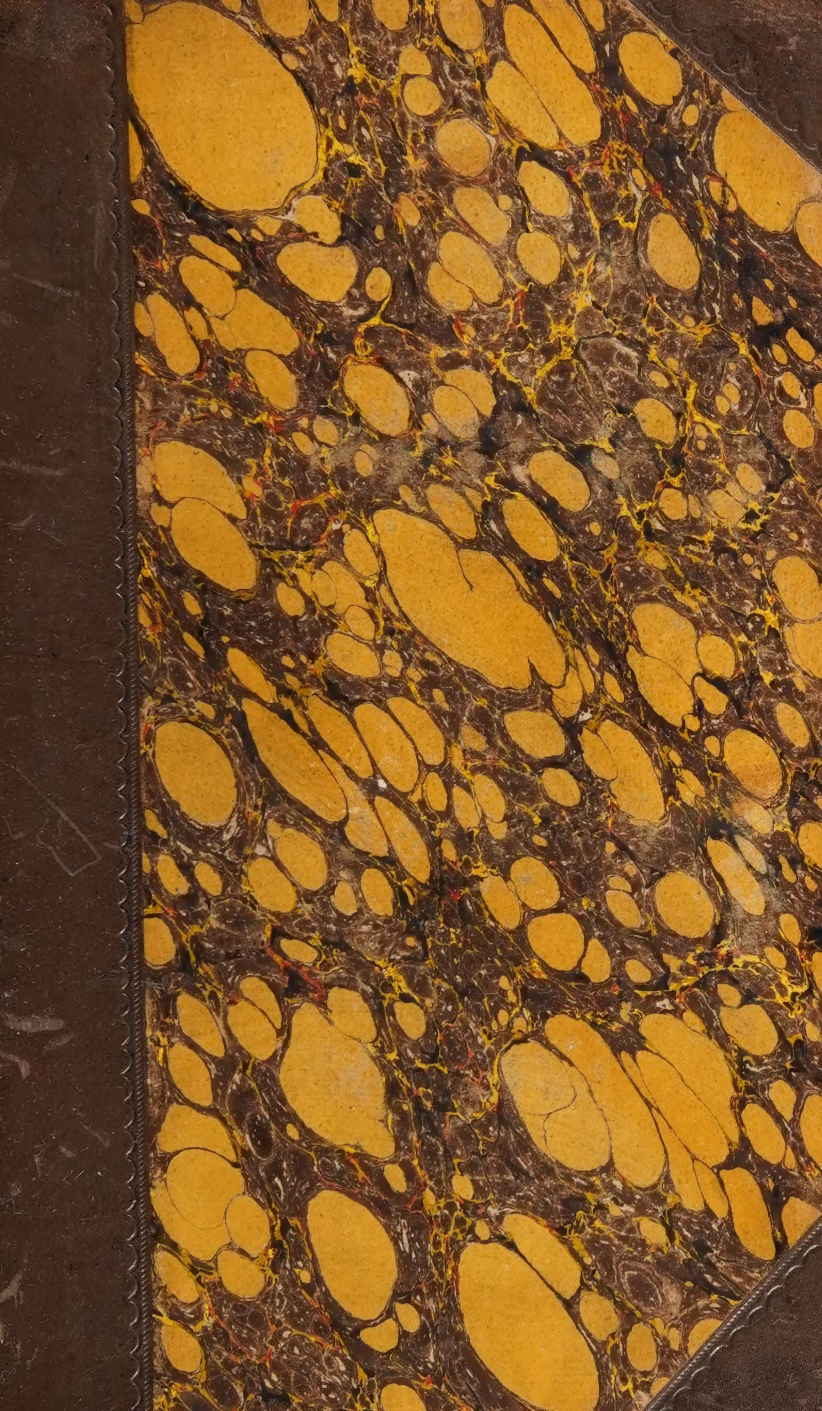
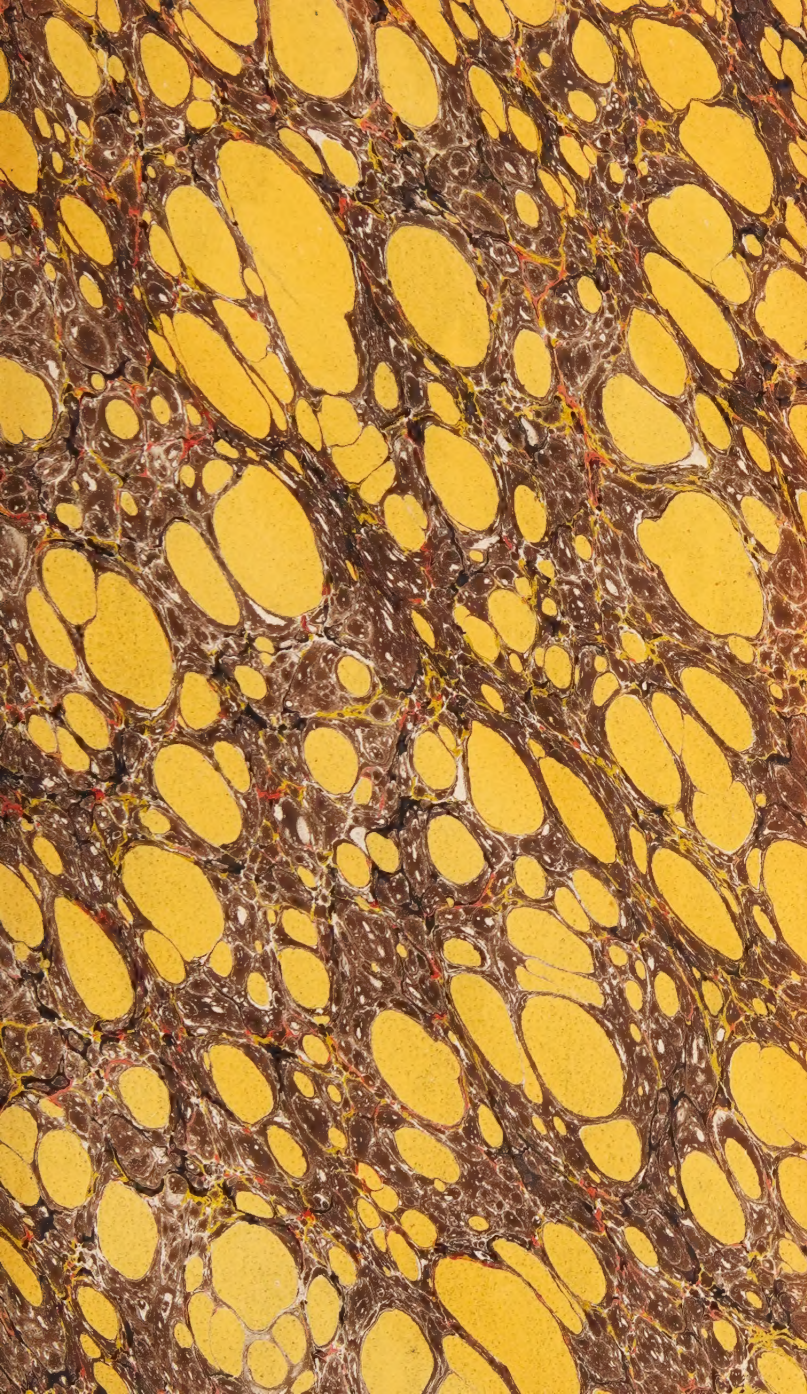
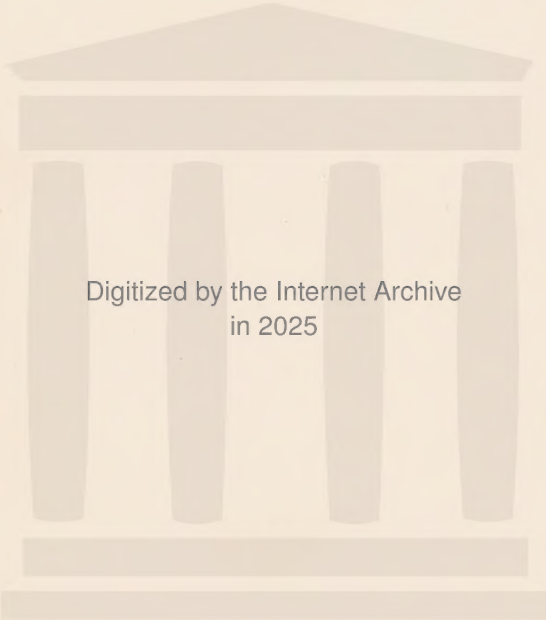










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DE VAVASOUR:

A TALE

OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

A true knight!

Not yet mature, yet matchless; firm of word;
Speaking in deeds, and deedless in his tongue;
His heart and hand both open, and both free;
For what he has, he gives—what thinks, he shows:
Yet gives he not till judgment guide his bounty,
Nor dignifies an impure thought with breath.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DE VAVASOUR.

CHAP. I.

THE PONT DU GARDE.

ON leaving the bower of the enchanting Calypso, Reginald prepared for his departure. The contents of the letter which called him from love and Cecile, were communicated to Agenor. The chief point related to the orders received from King Charles, to forward the Viennese troops to support the Maréchal de Briquebec, who had been sent to replace Alphonso de la Cerda, archdeacon of Paris.

“The news of his defeat,” said the primate, in his communication, “did not surprise me. The

worthy man is more fitted for religious than military affairs. Lorenzo has marched; and you, Reginald, must follow him with the same speed a lover would use in flying to the object of his affections. O, my friend, I envy you the brilliant career now opening on your view! War, with all its glory, has too often its engrained spots; but war against plunderers, ravishers, and murderers, is fighting in the cause of heaven, against the demons of hell. All good men must pray for your success, and all women respect you for aiding in their preservation from infamy and ruin. I need not say, ‘Fly like the eagle to the field of glory!’—your own energetic character assures me that the first banner planted on the walls of Saintes will be that of St. Maurice of Vienne.”

Reginald paid his parting homage, and received the benediction of his holiness. “The conflict with *Les Bâtards*,” said John, “will, I hope, be speedily terminated. Be assured of my friendship, and that I feel a warm interest in your welfare: I love you as if you were my son.”

Such kind expressions were not wasted on an

ungrateful soil: and Reginald departed, burning with the desire to prove himself worthy of such distinctions as he had received. He left Hawkwood to escort his baggage; and having commenced his march, soon reached the Pont du Garde. The beauty of the scenery, and the magnificence of the Roman aqueduct, made so forcible an impression on his mind, that he ordered the party to halt and refresh.

The guides who conducted the mules, had, on the march, recounted various feats of the banditti who infested that part of the country: these stories made Reginald recollect his valuable baggage.—“ I can do without sleep,” he said, “ but not without change of dress.” He accordingly ordered Hermann to ride forward to Nismes, and prepare the necessary quarters. Grass being cut for provender, and weeds for litter, the saddles were taken off, and the horses lay down in the back part of the cavern; while their riders, wrapped up in their watch-cloaks, slept soundly.

The moon shone feebly; but its glimmering light gave additional effect to the scene. When Regi-

nald advanced to the entrance of the cavern, his attention was caught by a shrill tone, resembling that of the bird of night, succeeded by another of a different nature: to these a third was added, which he imagined to be the note of the nightingale. The sentinel, who was a Provençal, knew the tricks of the country.

“ You may depend upon it, commander,” said he, “ that the muleteers you recently encountered were in earnest. I can explain these sounds.—The first, meant to imitate an owl, which is a bird of prey, denotes a query from the head-quarters of those villanous robbers, and means to say, ‘ Is there any prey on foot?’ The second is in imitation of a woodpecker and his taps against the trees which are hollow within; they have their number of taps, to answer their own ends: probably this sound means now to recommend caution, since the owl was quiet immediately. The third is to resemble the songster of the night, and is probably intended to denote good news. They use these precautions, not to alarm, or put upon their guard those whom they intend to attack; which

the sound of a whistle or horn would certainly do."

"Make no noise," answered De Vavasour; "arouse the men; tell them to be steady, and to prepare their arms; but not to disturb their horses."

While the soldier obeyed his orders, Reginald kept watch, and soon perceived the heads of two men leaning over the upper arch of the aqueduct, their bodies being concealed in what was formerly the conduit: he also saw something resembling a large paper ball floating in the air. The heads of these men were directed to the point from whence this ball had been blown by the wind, and from whence the last notes had appeared to come. The same noise, in imitation of the woodpecker, was repeated *nine* times.

"It is," said Reginald, "the number of the armed party with Hawkwood."

A long, loud, and shrill scream was then heard; the men's heads disappeared; and all was silent.

Reginald perceived four men in advance and

shortly afterwards Hawkwood and another, with the drivers and mules; then four, to form a rear-guard. The advanced party had passed the bridge, while Hawkwood, with the baggage, was on it; when a loud whistle was heard, and two troops of armed men appeared, cutting off the communication with those intended to protect both the front and rear. Hawkwood was in imminent danger: no time was to be lost. Reginald led to the attack the first soldiers that rushed from the cavern, crying "Prey!" The fight was not of long duration; for the soldiers formed the moment they arrived; and before their commander gave the signal for onset, he called upon the brigands to surrender.

Seeing the hopelessness of their situation, the party near our hero threw down their arms; but their leader, ordering them to cut off his breast-plate, cried out in English, as he leaped on the battlement of the bridge,---"Let fly your arrows at me if you will, but you shall never make Enguerrand your prey!" saying which, he leaped into the stream.

Reginald was leaning over the battlement, regarding the waters bubbling around the body they had received, when Hawkwood presented the sword of the chief. "Although we have not taken this daring brigand," said the trusty squire, "we have his weapon, and truly it is of fine temper: I wonder much how an Englishman could so far disgrace himself as to command a band of robbers."

"Hawkwood," returned his master, "judge not too rashly: when barons and seigneurs become marauders, you need not be surprised at reduced soldiers following their example. Recollect that Jean de l'Isle, an ally of the Pope, was lately executed, by orders of King Charles, for pillaging travellers. The captain is a brave fellow, and shall have his sword, if he be yet alive, Holla! Enguerrand! you are safe from us, now our property is safe from you. Take your sword, and use it better in future."

The river was much swollen, which reduced the force of the fall; and Enguerrand, being an expert swimmer, appeared above the water, and caught the

handle of the sword as it fell; then putting the weapon across his mouth, he swam down the stream.

Reginald now addressed the brigands:—"For your captain's sake, who is a gallant fellow, and a countryman of this officer, I will release you all, provided you promise to treat humanely those who may hereafter fall into your hands."

The promise being given, Reginald withdrew, and passed by some wounded men, who in the first onset had been cut down: among them there was one gray-haired sinner, who had implored and received mercy: near him lay a bow and arrow. When Reginald had passed, the old robber, seizing the bow, took a deliberate aim at him; but the arrow glided from the lion's head which guarded his shoulder. Hawkwood sprung towards the hoary wretch, and plunged his sword into his body; while the brigands exclaimed, "You accursed old villain! murderous to the last!"

As Hawkwood, by applying his foot to the body of the assassin, drew forth his sword, the dying man made a desperate effort to strike him with a

dagger in the back of the leg. His companions now begged that he might be left to them to dispose of; and this being granted, a cord was cut from the side of one of the mules, a running noose made, and the old scoundrel thrown over the battlements, and plunged into eternity, amidst the execrations of his own companions.

CHAP. II.

NISMES.

THE troops reached their destination without further interruption; and Reginald, recollecting the observations made by his friend Franciscus, hastened at early dawn to view the superb remains of ancient grandeur. Having viewed the Pharos, the Temple of Diana, and the Baths, he regarded with awe and pleasure the temple dedicated to the honor of Caius and Lucius Julius, sons of Augustus, which he considered as a noble remnant of Roman taste: he acknowledged that his friend's

remarks were just ; and that the building which he had admired at Vienne was simply a prætorium, containing an altar dedicated to the emperor himself. Reginald then visited the amphitheatre, called now the arena ; which being in good preservation, well displayed the physical powers of the Romans, as well as the magnificence of their ideas.

Reginald imagined that he saw thousands upon thousands of wild inhabitants struck with awe at the sights passing before their eyes ; while the wreath-bound consul, prætor, or emperor, surrounded by his sun-burnt centurions, looked on with an air of accustomed tranquillity. He saw the fantastic dresses of the Provençals, mingled with the more tasteful habiliments of the Roman ladies—the wives and daughters of the conquerors of the land. He heard the roar of wild beasts, the clashing of swords, the groans of men : he fancied himself in Rome, and was in a dream of grandeur : triumphal arches, columns, and pyramids floated in his imagination ; and he exclaimed, “ Would that I too were a conqueror ! ”

The sound of trumpets reminded our hero of the prospects really opening upon him: hitherto his career had been one of playfulness and sun-shine; now he had to move amid the clouds that lowered over France. The war was not one with *Les Bâtards* only; but it was one, in which the greater part of the *gens-d'armes* of France might feel inclined to take a share, for the prospect of success and riches was most tempting; and it was a war of extermination. The chiefs of the insurrection were the natural sons of nobles, who had neither education to correct their bad propensities, nor means to indulge in their career of profusion and debauchery: they had determined, therefore, to seize by force the possessions which the laws debarred them from inheriting. *Les Bâtards* were now intoxicated with the successes which they had gained: the troops to be opposed to them were collected from distant points, acting under different interests, jealous of each other's powers, and stronger in numbers than in union or discipline: of this *Reginald* was informed by *Lorenzo*.

“ The greater the difficulty, the greater the honor of surmounting it,” thought Reginald. He wrote to his friend Agenor as follows :—

“ Beloved friend,

“ Tell your beauteous lady, who mocks her knight, to record on her list another signal exploit ; for we have actually wounded some brigands at the Pont du Garde. Tell Franciscus that I have been highly pleased with Nismes ; and assure yourself of the affection of

“ REGINALD.”

CHAP. III.

TOULOUSE.

REGINALD took the road by Montpellier to Toulouse, where the troops moving from the south were to assemble, and where he was received with acclamations. He found the forces in good order. While the inspection was proceeding, he heard the distant sounds of martial music : from the direction of Navarre, Count Rodolphe defiled at the head of a force hastily levied ; while, from that of Burgundy, Don Calderos de Valenciana led the well-appointed army of the Dauphin ; that prince not condescending to act in person under the Maréchal de Briquebec.

The meeting between our young heroes and the Count was as warm and affectionate as it was sincere : the Don scarcely noticed the young men, but respectfully saluted the Count Rodolphe. The Count complimented the Don upon the appearance

of his troops, and concluded, by requesting that some of his experienced subalterns might aid him in forming his own levy. This request highly pleased the Don, and he accepted the Count's invitation to accompany him to his quarters.

While the leaders digested and arranged their plans, Reginald and Lorenzo enjoyed the freedom of confidential conversation; and in the evening Rodolphe joined them.

“ My dear brother,” said the Count to Lorenzo, “ you may guess the sacrifice I made in leaving you, when I had so many questions to ask : but the best policy of war is, to assure yourself of the attachment of those who are to serve under you. By prompt measures, I have, as I think, secured the zealous co-operation of the Don ; and now for love and Rosalie ! But you must not tell my little Rosebud that I thought of war before love.”

Before receiving orders to advance, a hundred lances arrived in the city, under the direction of the seneschal of the estates lately granted by King Charles to Reginald, Marquis de Montserrent. The lands had been taken from King Ed-

ward II. by the victorious arms of the Comte de Valois, uncle to the king of France. This prince, the greatest captain of the age, had been accompanied by his two sons, Philippe and Charles, and by Robert d'Artois, his relation. In the conquered district were the lands granted to Reginald, in lieu, as we have before said, of a large sum of money deposited for his use in the royal treasury, under the trust of Robert d'Artois, Comte de Beaumont, le Roger. The king did not find it convenient to part with the money; and Robert was satisfied with the grant made to his ward, under a special assurance that, if these lands were ceded to England, it should be stipulated that the Marquis had legally purchased, and that he was entitled to be treated as lord of the lands, unless he, after such cession, was found in arms against the king of England, claiming the dukedom of Aquitaine.

Reginald, still bearing in mind his friend Francis, sought out the objects most worthy of notice; and was particularly pleased with the façade of the Capitol, said to be built in the time

of Galba. He also visited the academy lately formed by *La gaie société*, and of which he sent a description to Franciscus; as also, through his friend, to another person, with whom the reader has but a slight acquaintance.

The general appointed to command the troops prudently drawn together at Toulouse was the Count d'Eu. On his arrival, he called a council of war; and having opened the commission, appointing him to serve, aid, and co-operate with the *Maréchal de Briquebec*, he stated that the English had broken the truce, inasmuch as certain of the adherents of King Edward, who still retained possession of the coast from Bordeaux to Bayonne, had taken part with *Les Bâtards*, who were now in a strong position near Saintes.

The Count d'Eu, perceiving the strength and character of his army, determined to take advantage of its efficiency. The troops of the Dauphin and archbishop were ordered to advance with the main body, while Count Rodolphe was placed at Réole, in order to check the movements of the English.

The Count d'Eu advanced rapidly to Angou-

lème, where a pursuivant at arms announced the arrival of the maréchal at Poitiers, where he had succeeded in rallying the discomfited troops of Alphonso de la Cerda. The maréchal communicated to the Count, that “as many of his troops had marched from Picardy and Normandy, he felt it necessary to halt three days, and requested a meeting at any place which the Count should consider as private and secure.”

CHAP. IV.

THE CONFERENCE.

IN a deep and secluded grotto, the maréchal, attended by a few knights, met the Count d'Eu, accompanied by Reginald.

It was determined that, on the evening of the third day, the maréchal should establish himself at Niort, and the Count at Jarnac.

“There are,” said the maréchal, “in my army so many soldiers who have fled before the despe-

rate rebels, that I must be cautious how I act: your troops are reported to be in good order and high courage. To you, therefore, I give the honor and the hazard of the onset;—your success will inspire my men.”

“ I thank you, my brave commander,” replied the Count d’Eu, “ for your confidence; and the glory of the day shall be entrusted to this youth, who is the favorite of my friend Robert d’Artois; and the greatest kindness I can do him, is by allowing him to prove that Reginald de Vavasour is worthy of royal favor and protection.”

The *maréchal* steadfastly regarded the youth to whom such a charge was to be consigned.

“ Have you ever seen a field of battle, young man ?” said he.

The temper of our hero was somewhat tried by this question, and he was about to reply hastily, when an officer announced that a party of *gens-d’armes* were passing through a defile below them.

“ What is their number ?” said the *maréchal*.

“ Five times our force,” was the answer, “ and heavily armed.”

“Withdraw the sentinels,” replied the *maréchal*, “and conceal the men.”

Reginald left the cave, and the *maréchal* and general continued their conference; when the latter related such particulars of the conduct of Reginald, (made known to him by Count Rodolphe,) as satisfied the *maréchal* as to the choice of a leader for the onset: he merely remarked,—“young troops always attack with fury; they do not know their danger.”

Reginald, on foot, watched the movements of the *gens-d’armes*. As they turned the corner of a rocky pass, one of the horses fell, and its rider dismounted to re-arrange some of the caparisons. Before he could remount, Reginald seized the bridle of the horse, attacked and disarmed the man, and returned with his prisoner to the grotto of conference. The stern-visaged captive was nothing dismayed at the sight of the armed band, among whom he found himself unexpectedly introduced.

“Who are you?” demanded the *maréchal*.

“I am a soldier,” returned he.

“ Whither going ? ”

“ To join Les Bâtards, at Saintes ; and there are plenty of others coming after me.”

“ Do you, by joining such a band of villains, expect to gain money, (for honor by them cannot even be known,) when the king has sent such a force to destroy them ? ”

“ If the king were to send five times the force, he would be beaten ; for every youth in France, who is not in direct line of succession, is arming for the grand cause.”

The prisoner was now removed, and the conference continued.

“ What this man says,” observed the maréchal, “ proves that caution is indispensable. I will watch these advancing parties ; you must attack speedily and vigorously : if we defeat the principals, the minor parties will soon be reduced to obedience. You have done well, young man, in seizing this bold fellow : if he do not give us full information, we will string him up on yonder tree, and leave him as a scare-crow to others as bad as himself.”

At Jarnac, Reginald received his final orders, and before he began his march, accurately inspected the appointments and arms of his troops.

CHAP. V.

THE BATTLE OF SAINTES.

THE town of Saintes, situated on a peninsula formed by the river Charente, had once been occupied by a colony of the Romans, who embellished it with many splendid edifices.

Les Bâtards did not occupy the town, which they had pillaged and burnt; but were encamped, in fancied security, among the beautiful gardens and vineyards in the vicinity.

Accompanied by Lorenzo and Hawkwood, Reginald arrived without interruption at the bridge, on which stand the remains of a Roman arch, erected in honor of Germanicus. Reginald could not perceive the position of the enemy; but, from not hearing any noise, he was assured the town

was unoccupied: he therefore introduced the troops destined for the attack, and took up a position in the arena: he then resumed his station on the ruined arch, concealing himself behind one of its projections.

Before the first gleam of light streaked the horizon, Lorenzo noticed newly-lighted fires, and soon after saw various figures passing and repassing; but there did not appear any troops near.

Lorenzo was sent to Hermann, with orders to take possession of the ground where the fires were; to make prisoners whoever he found on the spot, and send them bound into the arena; but to make no unnecessary noise. This was performed by Hermann. At break of day Reginald gave Lorenzo directions where to station his cavalry; and, leaving a small guard with the prisoners, advanced with the main body towards Hermann. Here the fight had already commenced; for those who came for their food had been either put to flight, or destroyed.

The quarter attacked was, however, only occupied by a small detachment of the enemy, for the

guides had, either purposely or through ignorance, given wrong information. In fact, the people of the country were so afraid, that they would not approach the camp of Les Bâtards. These misguided men were strongly entrenched, and determined to fight until death. Reginald, however, had made an impression on one point: those who fled were cut down by his cavalry; but one body of desperadoes resolved to drive him from his advantage, and Reginald was compelled to use his knowledge of arms, as well as skill in war, to maintain his position. By an able movement, he prevented Les Bâtards from executing their intentions of cutting him off from his cavalry; placing himself at the head of which, he bore down all opposition, and cut his way up to the point where the *maréchal* had commenced his attack. The infantry were not so fortunate: they were driven back into the town, but maintained themselves in the arena, until reinforcements arrived from the Count d'Eu.

Les Bâtards, who fled from the troops of the *maréchal* towards Saintes, were pursued by Regi-

nald, who appeared to fly like an arrow from one point to another ; and wherever he moved, death and destruction followed. After a severe contest in the town, Reginald was completely successful : the battle was, however, desperately maintained in other quarters ; but the skill of the leaders, and the courage of their troops, decided the day, and all who resisted were cut to pieces.

Reginald and Don Calderos were the two persons who most distinguished themselves in the destruction of their opponents. When they met, the latter rallied our knight on the severity of the blows he inflicted.

“ I think, Don Calderos,” rejoined De Vavasour, “ your two-handed Vienne was not idle.”

“ True,” answered our old acquaintance ; “ I am a blood-thirsty Spaniard, who, in a fight, always kill all I can ; while you, it is known, attacked our troops of Dauphiné, yourself almost unarmed.”

“ Then,” observed Reginald, “ I had to encounter knights, men at arms, and soldiers ; here I had to deal with murderers and ravishers ; and I thank

the Power that strengthened my arm and steeled my heart."

"Well said," cried the brave *maréchal*; "we owe the day to you, and no time must be lost in paying our debt. Kneel, and rise a knight-banneret."

The banners of France floated above the head of Reginald, when Lorenzo, who had been employed with the cavalry, in pursuit, reached the arena with a number of prisoners, among whom were some Englishmen. These, by the intercession of Reginald, were considered prisoners of war; but *Les Bâtards* were delivered over to a military court, of which Don Calderos was named president.

The punishment even of the guilty is always a painful subject to dwell on, and therefore the reader will excuse us from minutely detailing the measures adopted by the determined and severe president. Suffice it to say, that neither Marius, nor Sylla, nor even L. J. Brutus, ever delivered sterner sentences.

CHAP. VI.

ELEONORE.

SOON after the departure of Reginald from Avignon, Franciscus followed the remains of his mother to the grave, and in his retirement from society, devoted himself entirely to the study of the classics. Agenor frequently visited him, and Giacomo Colonna treated him with the greatest attention and kindness. From both these friends he heard that the people of Avignon and the neighbouring country were much interested in a case of some singularity, and with respect to which reports were exceedingly various and contradictory. The leading facts were these :

A farmer, advanced in years, became enamoured of a girl whose age was nearer to childhood than adolescence. Her parents were of good family, and originally of good fortune ; but had so far exceeded their means, that, at their death, there was

left scarcely more than sufficient for her maintenance. To a relation, of the name of Turquin, they bequeathed the care of their only child.

Turquin had neither a bad heart or bad character, but he had what he called a bad stomach, which bad food did not suit. He found that old Cardinez gave good dinners, had good wine, was a good fellow, and possessed good store of wealth. It was well known that Cardinez had no relations: if Turquin, therefore, could favor the farmer's views on the pretty girl, the farmer must, out of complaisance, favor his views on pretty cheer. Eating had been the principal thought, as well as occupation, of the *Sieur Cardinez*, using drinking as an adjunct: the new object in view balanced, for part of the day, the scale of his thoughts; and when appetite was satisfied, then came marriage.

Eleonore, heartily tired of the restraint Turquin subjected her to,—sick to death of hearing about his bad dinners and his poverty,—determined to listen to the proposals of the old farmer, who consented to settle all his property on her, in case of his dying without children. The pretty child

thought as little about being the manager of a house, as she did of being the mother of children : she determined to have a comfortable apartment, distinct from her husband ; and was equally determined that there should be no legal opponents to her future claims ;—not indeed that she loved money ; on the contrary, she was totally unacquainted with its use, and knew as little of it as of love. In a short space of time, Eleonore heartily regretted the change she had made.

Cardinez was a compound of profusion and avarice ; and, to complete the charms of his character, was a violent, quarrelsome lump of flesh, without mind ; while his lesser half was all soul. The refusal of certain rights, to which Cardinez had more of a legal than a natural claim, served to increase the violence of his temper, and produced many family quarrels ; which the good people of England call curtain scenes, but which, in this case, might be called, more properly, parlour politics. At one time the farmer swore that he would dissolve the marriage ; at another, that he would be the death of his wife, that he would imprison her for life,

that he would be deeply revenged, &c. ; during all which threatenings, he most probably felt the quarrel was “ much ado about nothing.”

One day the hour of dinner arrived, and no wife was to be found : her absence at the hours of morning and evening meals was a customary thing, therefore created no surprise ; but hitherto she had been present at mid-day ;—not that the meal was to her taste, either as to its appearance or as to the modes adopted during the dissection and mastication ; for Eleonore had been brought up by her parents so as to adorn a higher station in life ; but her natural kindness of heart induced her to appear to the household as a happy and contented wife. The house was searched without success.

Some days had passed away, and the neighbourhood had found other subjects to talk of, when the good people of the village were thrown into confusion by the arrival of the guardian Turquin with a band of armed men. Search was now again made : still no Eleonore. Turquin was about to leave the house, when, striking his forehead, as if he recalled something to mind, he ordered the men

to strike their javelins against the walls in all directions. In an unfrequented corner of the more ancient part of the house, (which had formerly been a seigneur's château,) the leader of the guard perceived a hollow sound, as he struck with the hilt of his sword: the wood-work was soon forced, and he entered into a small chamber, well fitted for deeds of darkness.

In a corner of this turret they found something white; it was the dress of a female: they found also a bandeau of foreign manufacture, and a knife of curious workmanship, each stained with blood. The old farmer fainted at the sight. Turquin imputed the supposed deed of guilt to him: he was carried to prison; and the judges of the law soon afterwards arriving at Carpentras, Cardinez was brought to trial.

The story created much interest. The descriptions of Eleonore's beauty and Cardinez's savage conduct, were exaggerated, as much as popular prejudice on either side could effect, and nothing was heard or spoken of but the cruel husband and the innocent murdered wife.

Franciscus was aroused from his feelings of regret for his departed mother, and became interested in the examination which was about to take place : having received his early education at Carpentras, he was anxious to revisit the scenes of his boyhood ; and, possessed as he was of the finest feelings of human nature, we cannot be surprised at his anxiety to investigate the mysterious circumstances attending the supposed murder of a youthful and interesting female. At an early hour, accompanied by Agenor, he left Avignon ; and having renewed his acquaintance with some of the principal town's-people of Carpentras, was provided with good accommodation in the court-house.

Aurélié would not be present at such a scene ; but Cecile persuaded her father that it was absolutely necessary for him to attend, in order to aid the judges with his knowledge of law ; and that it was equally necessary for her to accompany him. Mademoiselle de Cominges felt as if half the world had slipped from her feet when her knight quitted Avignon : Carpentras would be a new

scene ; and a trial, which she had never witnessed, must be an object of curiosity to one whose mind was ardently alive to every species of novelty. Accordingly, the father and daughter set forward, well provided with every species of book that the Count thought there would be a possibility of requiring, as furnishing precedents in divine or human law.

When Cecile met Franciscus, she made a thousand inquiries concerning the Viennese troops, their numbers, their courage, their discipline. Franciscus declared he was no judge of the minutiae of war ; “ but, Mademoiselle Cecile,” added he, “ of one thing I can assure you, they have a noble leader ; and, young as he is, not an inexperienced one. His whole soul is devoted to his profession : I do not believe his thoughts even for one moment turn to any other subject.”

“ Not even to beauty, Franciscus ?” falteringly asked she.

“ No, not even to beauty,” replied the merciless student : “ even when the Lady Aurélie reclined

in his arms, he appeared as indifferent to her charms as if she had been of wood instead of lovely flesh."

"The cold knight!" said Cecile, inwardly smiling at the thought how soon persons could be changed.

CHAP. VII.

THE TRIAL.

THE high character for legal as well as general knowledge which Franciscus had acquired, during the prosecution of his studies at Bologna, introduced him to the notice of the judges; and the rank of Count Agenor procured for him every attention.

Witnesses were produced; neighbours and servants swore to Cardinez having frequently threatened to take away the life of his wife. This Cardinez acknowledged he had said, while under

the irritation of anger; but that he never had injured, nor would injure, woman or child, man or beast. The men who had searched the house swore to the swooning of Cardinez at the sight of the bloody dress. This he also acknowledged, but protested that it was entirely owing to the horror of the sight, to which he was unaccustomed. The servants were then questioned as to his conduct on the day of their mistress's disappearance. "When the absence of Madame Eleonore was first discovered, did the prisoner express any surprise or sorrow?" inquired one of the judges.

"On the contrary," replied the person addressed, "he seemed rather pleased at her absence."

"When the house was searched, did the prisoner assist?" was the next question.

"He did not."

"Did he use any particular expression, when he found the search was unsuccessful?"

"No; but he seemed rather pleased than otherwise."

"When informed of the arrival of Turquin and the soldiers, did he show any signs of guilt?"

“ He was very much frightened, and said,—
‘ Good God ! what is to happen next ? ’ ”

While the judges were consulting together, a circumstance occurred of rather a singular nature.

There happened to be in court a deaf and dumb boy, who was generally suspected of making up for the deficiencies of his nature by certain artificial acquirements, called pilfering and stealing. The young rogue did not know what was the matter ; but went because others did, attracted by the general desire of seeing what was going on. There was in court a young man of foreign air, who accidentally came under the notice of this boy. The lad instantly began clapping his hands ; and, taking from his pocket a purse with some small pieces of money, shook it, and pointed to the stranger. His parents were present, and believed that he had stolen the purse ; they consequently strove to keep him quiet ; while he as vehemently endeavoured to make them understand that the donor stood before them.

The giver on this occasion did not seem half so well pleased as the receiver : his color came and

went, and he took the earliest means to change his position. Instinct, curiosity, or that spirit for diving into mysteries, which legal pursuits bestow on the mind of the ardent scholar, determined Franciscus to make further inquiries. Cecile had also observed the boy, and told Franciscus to address the mother. He commenced his questions in a cautious manner, pressing his points so as not to put the talkative woman on her guard.

The dame thus told her story: “the young rogue (and he is a rogue, though I say it, who am his mother, worse for me! and should not say it,) was loitering about the house of old Cardinez, bird-nesting as he wished us to think, but with the intent of fowl-stealing, as I firmly believe. Now, when he steals a fowl, we do not get any good of it, poor as we are; but he carries it off to a set of mischievous young rascals, as great rogues as himself—but no matter, now, as to that. On some rubbish being thrown close to him, he secreted himself under some thick bushes, near an unoccupied part of the house. Soon afterwards, he saw a person descending a small ladder with a heavy

load of bricks, which load he discharged among the bushes where our boy lay, and whose head was not sufficiently hard to save him. He made a sort of a noise between a gurgle in his throat and a scream; and the person who did the mischief carried him to the nearest road, thrust this purse into his pocket, and sent a peasant to bear him home. Now this is the story, as far as my good man, and our two daughters, could make out."

Franciscus had, in the morning, visited the premises, and traced the outside of the building: he had discovered the very spot the woman had described; and had found concealed there both ladder and bricks. He had also ascended to a window blocked up with brushwood, but which had formerly been bricked up, and found himself in the supposed chamber of guilt: this he had carefully examined, and discovered that the door-way which led into it from the house, had been closed with wainscoting, the appearance of which denoted that it had not been opened previously to the arrival of Turquin. The turret had been long deserted; and, if the young wife had been murdered there,

she must have been brought in by force at the window, which for an old man to perform, was almost impossible. If the deed had been committed there, her body would most probably be forthcoming.

Under these circumstances, tallying so well with the woman's story, he considered, in his own mind, that the stranger was the person implicated, and therefore suggested to the judges that he should be immediately seized. Franciscus also requested them to re-examine Turquin, for the purpose of ascertaining what were the motives which induced him to search the house, and particularly what had occasioned him to return, as he was upon the point of leaving it, his first search having proved ineffectual. To these questions Turquin replied :—

“ The cause of my searching the house was a very simple one: a young Spaniard, who is an acquaintance of my sister, hinted to me, that in such an old house there might be some obscure recesses behind the wainscot, where any dark deed might secretly be perpetrated.”

“ What is that Spaniard's name ?” inquired the judge.

“ They call him Valdez,” replied the interrogated.

“ Where is he ?”

“ I saw him here not long ago : he wears long black hair curling over his shoulders, and small mustachios.”

Officers were immediately sent out, but their trouble was saved by the arrival of the Spaniard in custody : the boy again expressed his delight, ran up to him, bowed, shook his head, and looked at the purse. The parents had found out the peasant who had brought home the boy, and who deposed that he was directed to a particular spot by the person now in custody, and who rewarded him for promising to carry home the little muetto.

Franciscus recommended that the bloody bandage should be produced.

“ Do you know that bandage ?” said the judge to Valdez, who firmly answered, “ No !”

Franciscus then handed to the judge a piece of silk which he had found in the apartment : Valdez denied all knowledge of it likewise : Franciscus

pointed out the Spanish mark upon it, and desired it might be taken care of.

The bandage was lying on the table before the judge, when an itinerant Jew pedlar cast his eyes upon it, and claimed it as his property.

This man, Hiriam by name, was a well-known and extraordinary character; he was a follower of all trades, and master of none. The interest produced by Hiriam's appearance on the scene greatly increased the desire of all to know who the fresh parties were, why they were implicated, and how they had become acquainted.

"Is that bandage your property?" inquired the judge, of Hiriam.

"Yes, it is."

"Do you know that it was found with the dress of the supposed murdered female?"

"No, I do not."

Franciscus desired that the dress might be produced.

"Did you ever see a person in that dress?" pursued the judge.

“ Yes,” answered the pedlar, “ I did ; on the day of my arrival in the little village of —, with my pack on my back, I met, at some distance from the houses, two persons, both very young ; one was, I think, this young man, though he did not then wear black clothes ; and the other a woman dressed in such a gown as this : I remember well the pretty strawberries in gold that were worked on the flounce ; but in Provence, as in Naples, and other parts of Italy, the people, gentle and simple, are very fond of gold embroidery ; and I sell myself a great deal.”

“ Do not take up the time of the court with your trade,” said the dignitary of the law ; “ but answer the questions addressed to you. What sort of a person was the female ?”

“ She was a slight figure of a girl, with a fair face.”

“ Did she look like a married woman ?”

“ No, she looked like a young simpleton, that would not have known gold from silver-gilt.”

“ What questions were asked ?” continued the judge.

“The young man,” replied Hiriam, “said— ‘Moses, can you let blood?’ I answered, ‘My name is not Moses, but Hiriam, and I can let blood.’ ‘This young lady is dying,’ said he. I lost not a moment;—put down my pack, tucked up my sleeves, seized my lancet, hit the spot, and the blood flowed freely: she fainted; I became alarmed; tore up the first thing that came to hand, and *that* (pointing to the bandage,) was it; bound up the wound, and the girl recovered.”

The day was proved to be the same as that on which Eleonore disappeared. It appeared to the judges that the young Spaniard was certainly acquainted with the finale of that day’s wonders, and they were therefore determined to proceed to violent measures, in case he prevaricated, or refused to tell what he knew.

“Do you recollect,” resumed the judge, turning to Valdez, “the day on which this man, calling himself Hiriam, says he met you?”

“I never met this man,” was the reply.

“He swears to what he says.”

“ Can a true Catholic believe the oath of a Jew ? ”

“ It is necessary to be cautious in crediting the oaths of all men ; but perhaps he believes in a Supreme Being, while you possibly do not.”

After a pause, the judge continued :—“ Have you any thing further to say, Hiram ? ”

“ Nothing,” answered the man of many trades, “ but that he gave me this piece of Spanish silver, and said, if I held my tongue I should have more, but that he had then no more about him, having left his purse by accident at home.”

The silver was of the same kind as that in Muetto’s purse. This was no proof, it is true ; but the judges thought it worthy of notice.

A Spanish merchant now came forward, and stated, that the prisoner had frequently changed Spanish gold at his house ; and that on the day before the one in question, he had given him, in lieu of some large gold coin, a certain number of small pieces of the same sort as those produced, which Valdez put into the same purse given to the boy, or at least a similar one.

The judges now ordered the instruments of torture to be produced. On their arrangement being completed, Valdez became pale as death. He declared that, rather than suffer on that dreadful engine, he would confess himself guilty, although innocent. The answer was, "Such a confession will not satisfy the ends of justice. Tie him down."

"I will confess all," cried the fear-stricken Spaniard. He then acknowledged, that he had formed a plan against Cardinez; that he had determined to possess the person of his wife, and obtain, by direct or indirect means, the property of which he believed the farmer to be master. That he had discovered an apartment which had been blocked up, and had taken down the bricks, in removing which the accident happened to Muetto. That, meeting with the practitioner, he determined to avail himself of an indisposition of which Eleonore complained. That he had removed her to a place of secrecy, which he had before prepared; and while Eleonore was reposing after the fright and illness that she had suffered, he had taken off

the bandage and gown, of which Franciscus had produced a piece, which having replaced with another, he had laid them, with the knife, in the closet: that he afterwards suggested to Turquin the measures which the latter had adopted, hoping that Cardinez would suffer for the supposed murder. He concluded by declaring that Eleonore was equally ignorant of his plan as of his intentions; but refused to name the place of her concealment.

The torture was again threatened.

“ You yourself may have murdered the unfortunate woman,” said the judge; “ tie him down.”

Terrified by the stern manner of the judge, Valdez confessed, and was remanded.

The place was searched; no Eleonore could be found; but soon afterwards Turquin was assured of her safety. Valdez was sentenced to perpetual hard labor in the galleys. Franciscus visited the prisoner in his dungeon; and the latter stated that he was of good family in Spain, but had been obliged to leave his country on account of an extensive robbery in which he was successfully engaged,

but of which there was reason to apprehend a discovery ; that on his arrival in the neighbourhood of Carpentras, he had renewed an acquaintance with one of his countrymen, who had introduced him to a gossiping old woman, sister of Maitre Turquin : she had told him the history of Eleonore, and her prospects of wealth at the death of her husband. By dint of presents, he had interested this dame in his favor, and used to hover about the house of Cardinez with his guitar, playing the lover in order to deceive Eleonore, who was to be the sacrifice to his advancement in wealth.

Franciscus advised this man to appeal to the pope, stating himself to be a native of Spain, and of good family, and willing to enter into a religious house, to atone for his errors. The application was forwarded by the Colonnas, and Valdez placed in a monastery subjected to the most rigid rules of abstinence and mortification.

Franciscus also visited Cardinez, whom he found suffering under severe illness. He comforted the old man by assuring him that his wife was perfect-

ly innocent of every thing but the flight. His illness nevertheless increased, and Cardinez died, leaving all his wealth to Maitre Turquin, in trust for Eleonore, to whom he sent his pardon and blessing.

Cecile was much interested in behalf of the unfortunate female, who had been severely censured for her supposed intimacy with the wicked Valdez: her spirit was in arms, and she determined to discover the place of Eleonore's abode, and comfort her by offers of protection. Cecile felt, and justly felt, that the expression of pity from one female towards another is always received with kindness; but the effect is ten times more potent when one party is basking in the sun-shine of prosperity, and the other shrinking under the storm of adversity. Cecile was indefatigable, and succeeded. She found in Eleonore a picture of simplicity; and she left her happy and grateful, under female protection, and in the certainty of receiving all the attentions which her situation required. We shall have much to say hereafter upon her

place of refuge ; but for the present must proceed with our story.

CHAP. VIII.

THE CLAIMANT.

FRANCISCUS published, in Latin, a statement of the case, which proved the complete innocence of Eleonore. After the funeral of Cardinez, it was discovered that his wealth was very considerable, and every body expected the young widow would remove to Avignon, which was then one of the most celebrated places in France for romance, love, and intrigue. Franciscus was an Italian, and probably as assailable as the rest of his countrymen by the arrows of the little urchin, “ who shoots in sport, and smiles to see his wounds ;” but his hour was not yet come, although he was twenty-two, handsome, and open to flattery. Such a person might like to see the young and fair wi-

dow, and might also feel a slight wish to be seen ; for modesty as to his person, whatever he might feel as to the power of his talents, was not a point of his character.

Franciscus visited Turquin, mentioned the defence which he had published, and expressed his desire that the fair object of his anxiety should be made acquainted with the interest she had excited. Turquin stated, in reply, that his young ward had established herself in a convent for the purpose of pursuing her education.

On returning home, our pensive youth received a letter from Cæsar, as he always called Reginald, who confided to him that he had lost his heart to Cecile de Cominges. “ By the next messenger,” wrote he, “ I will forward a billet for the captivating fair under cover to you, but without an address.”

Cecile, who had been long since particularly introduced to Franciscus, entrusted him with a letter for Cæsar, of whom they conversed very frequently : they also often spoke of Eleonore.

Franciscus again visited Turquin, and found him much distressed at a notice received from a law-

yer, who had been directed by a relation of the deceased to lay claim to the property of Cardinez; he affecting to believe the latter's will a forgery. Franciscus requested Turquin to obtain permission for him to see Madame Eleonore. At the next visit, he learnt that the name of the claimant was Hermann Cardinez, and that he was in the service of the archbishop of Vienne.

“ I know the youth,” said Franciscus; “ he was lately at Avignon with the escort of Count Agenor. I will write directly to the primate upon the subject; and on receiving his answer, perhaps the fair widow will admit me into her presence.”

In the letter which Franciscus addressed to the primate, he was very guarded as to his expressions; but he took care to enforce his case sufficiently to procure an answer calculated to remove all doubt.—“ If,” said he, “ your highness has ever seen a drooping lily, and wished to save it from the blustering winds or torrents of rain, then you may imagine my anxiety to protect an innocent and unhappy female. Her wealth is the only consolation she now possesses, if wealth can be

considered any consolation, or give any comfort to a mind diseased. That wealth, however, enables her to be independent herself, and forwards her inclination towards aiding and providing for the wants of others."

The primate wrote in reply, as follows:—

" I applaud highly, my friend Franciscus, the efforts you have made to elicit truth, and to probe to the bottom the wound inflicted upon the character of your client elect. There can be no claim on the part of Hermann, particularly as his father is a married man: this I know to be true; but I cannot be brought forward, either directly or indirectly, in proof of what I state. The bearer of this is your old acquaintance, formerly chaplain of Montleans; but now employed in a military capacity. He will be enabled to give you sufficient proof of the entrance of the claimant's name as Hermann Cardinez de Fredericksburg. The young man may be called on to prove his title to the latter cognomen; and, in the attempt, it must appear that he is the acknowledged, but illegitimate son of the Count de Lunheim."

Franciscus, on the receipt of this, went again to Turquin, assured him of success, learned that the widow was at the convent of St. Clara, and that the lawyer employed for the claimant had been retained by an agent of Don Calderos. These circumstances were communicated to Cecile, and she consulted her father, stating the case in regular precise terms.

“ Laws,” answered the Count de Cominges, “ were made for the benefit of mankind. *Lex terræ* stands unassailable ; A, in this case, appears to be *filius nulli*, and therefore his claim is a nullity. The law cannot perform impossibilities: the law cannot make you a man, or A heir-at-law to any property whatever. Whether B’s claim will be found strictly good or not, is a question between the king and B ; that is to say, a question whether C’s will be forged or not ; but A is naught. If C has not given, B cannot hold ; but stay ——”

“ Ay, father,” interrupted Cecile, “ stay awhile ! you do not recollect all the circumstances : B and C were intermarried ; and the settlement

then made by the latter is confirmed by his will, with the introduction of a trust."

"Then the affair between Rex and B is at an end, and A will be non-suited."

Cecile put the above upon paper, and forwarded it to Eleonore :—" I think," said she, " this will puzzle my pretty bird in the cage for one evening at least."

CHAP. IX.

LOVE LETTERS.

WHILE Reginald was courting the favors of Bellona, Count Agenor was happily domesticated at Avignon, where he was confirmed ambassador by king Charles. The young Countess had corresponded with her pretty mother-in-law, and they were both in possession of each other's secrets, which, like many other mysterious matters, would be in a few months developed to the world. To pass the winter with some occupation, and avoid the necessity of facing the vent de Bise, Aurélie

commenced learning Italian under Franciscus, and painting under Simon, who had been invited by Pope John to give the aid of his great talents, in decorating the splendid palace which his holiness was building at Avignon.

It happened one day, when the Countess was occupied in amusing a youthful visitor, that Franciscus entered, and announced the arrival of a messenger from Sir Reginald De Vavasour.

“How is my dear knight?” said Aurélie, “for so I will always call the preserver of my life, even at the risk of making my husband jealous. Has he added another to the list of his signal exploits? Apropos! He was very modest in his account of the affair on the road to Nismes; for the chief of the brigands, the famous Enguerrand, became master of his letter to me, and himself related the affair.”

“And is Sir Reginald your knight?” whispered the lady.

“It is impossible, my dear,” replied Aurélie, “that he can be *yours*, for you never saw him.”

The lady blushed. Aurélie, hearing the noise of

horses in the court-yard, and guessing that it was her husband, ran out to meet him, and be the first to tell the news.

Franciscus took advantage of her absence, to say, “Mademoiselle Cecile, I am commissioned by my friend to deliver to you this letter: you may rely on my honor, secresy, and discretion.”

Aurélie returned with Agenor. Cecile looked as awkward and ashamed as any young lady, caught in the fact of a correspondence with a young knight, can look; but she hid the letter in her bosom. Aurélie pressed the fair visitor to remain; but Cecile was in too great haste to peruse her letter, and so bade rather a hasty adieu.

When the lively Cecile reached her home, the letter was released from a prison where the rulers of kingdoms would not have sighed to be enchained; and having received an infinity of kisses and welcomes, was opened. It ran as follows:—

“My adored and lovely Rose,

“I want eloquence, but I am not deficient in warmth or truth: I feel the full force of beauty’s

captivation; but I will not express my feelings, because the words might assume the tone of common-place flattery; nor will I breathe the name of her I adore, lest the fortune of war or any mischance should deliver this billet into the hands of another. Hitherto the scenes of life through which I have passed, since thy adieu thrilled on my ear, have been of a favorable nature. The trumpet of war has sounded its inspiring and spirit-stirring notes; I have been selected for the command, and have been honored as the leader of the assault. Congratulate me with your heart's best wishes, and receive me, when I return, as one who would dare all for honor, and who lives in the hope of laying those honors at your feet."

"This is," said Cecile, "I am sure, the first love-letter Reginald ever wrote; and I am truly happy he knows my character sufficiently well, not to think I should wish to read of *hearts* and *darts*, fluttering Cupids and sickening blisses. No: De Vavasour, cut thy way to fame, and then come and repose thy laurel-crowned head on the bosom

of one who resigned herself, without resistance, to love and thee."

Another letter which she opened contained an account of the *Jeu d'Amour*. Cecile was so delighted with the description, that she determined, if ever she obtained sufficient influence, to establish a similar court, of which Franciscus was to be president.

"I will write a Latin essay," said she, laughing, "upon the subject, and present it to my father, who, if he is in good humour, will say I deserve *κῦδος*; and if in a bad one, he will use his favorite Spanish proverb, 'De una mula que haze y de una hija que habla, Libera nos, Domine!' Well, I will answer my love's letter:—what shall I say?—for I never wrote a love-letter any more than brave Reginald. Suppose I translate one of Ovid's Epistles into French prose? If I don't write, he will think me cruel; if I do write, he will think me a fool. But he knows I am neither one nor the other!"

Cecile took up her pen. "I will not write!" exclaimed she; and she did.

Her epistle ran as follows:—

“ It appears from your brief epistle that you were thinking more of Mars than of Venus ; more of shrieks than of sighs. If my good wishes can serve you,—you, my own knight, have them in all the plenitude of ardor. Our mutual friend will send you this. Exterminate those wretches who tore you from one who lives only in the hope of your return.”

Cecile hastened to her friend, the Countess Aurélie:—“ Reginald,” said she, “ has added another brilliant exploit to the list.”

“ How know *you* that, my fair informer ?” inquired the Countess.

Cecile was confused ;—but was not so easily brought to confess the receipt of a love-letter.

“ It was through Franciscus I learnt it,” she faltered out.

CHAP. X.

PETRARCH.

THE year passed away, and, in its course, Cecile became a boarder in the convent of St. Clara, where her intimacy with Eleonore daily increased. Both these ladies had an inclination to study, and both determined to take advantage of the superior opportunities afforded for that purpose by a life of seclusion; for whether as a professed nun, or merely an inmate of a convent, it was necessary to retire from society, and shun the treacherous notice of man.

Aurélie frequently visited Cecile, and was by her introduced to the interesting Eleonore. In the ardor of her character, Aurélie dwelt much upon the friendship and intimacy subsisting between her husband and Petrarch, by which name we shall in future designate Franciscus.

“ You know him, I suppose, Madame ?” said she to Eleonore.

“ No,” replied the other, “ I do not. He has often solicited my guardian for an introduction, but I was ashamed to appear before him. I feel as if I could fall on my knees, and almost worship the man, who has saved that which is more valuable to me than life,—my fair fame.”

The Countess smiled, as she remarked :—

“ If you saw the young lawyer, I am inclined to think that your gratitude would not grow cold ; indeed, he is almost perfection ! To hear him read ; to hear him sing ; to listen to his recitation—he is one of the best, as he is one of the most learned of men.”

“ You speak warmly, Madame la Comtesse,” ejaculated Eleonore.

“ I speak as I feel,” returned Aurélie. “ When I first beheld this pensive young man, I neither did nor could estimate his worth : my husband is warmly attached to him ; and it is from him that I learn his full merits. Franciscus is low-spirited ; is unhappy ; but he is amiable, he is accomplished.”

After Aurélie departed, Cecile confirmed all

that had been said. “His modesty,” remarked she, “is apparently great as to his talents, but not as to his person. But you ought to applaud him to the very echo! O, I wish that I were a man! I would make the world ring either with applause or condemnation of me: the former I should prefer, but the latter I should not dread. All I should desire, would be to be talked of for something.”

“For my part, Cecile, I do not wish to come under the public notice; unfortunately for me, the gaze of the vulgar has already been too strongly fixed on my character and conduct: such events I did not expect when I entered life, but we must learn to endure. As for this youth,—this to me more than man,—he stepped forth to save me from that species of infamy to which death would have been infinitely preferable. I long to see him, and yet I fear it: I long to thank him, and yet I dread that in so doing I shall go beyond all bounds, and compromise the character of our sex. I am, Cecile, a weak foolish girl; I could say all I feel, and yet know that I was wrong in so saying. In

short, I dare not meet this famous scholar, and yet should feel happy to kneel before him, and die in his arms."

"Very rapturous and very pathetic, my pretty sylph!" answered Cecile; "but let us recollect, Petrarch is but a mortal, and may wish to die in your arms as well as you in his; and if two such people were to die together in a convent, and our lady abbess should hear of it,—by our statue of St. Clara, there would be '*multum in parvo*,' or many people collected in a small space, to form a kind of petticoat court-martial; and then you would most probably be shut up in your cell, and I in mine, and our friend the lawyer sent to prison. Meanwhile, as he cannot arrive to-night, shall I tell you what sort of a man he is? You cannot call him regularly handsome; you cannot say he is the most graceful of men; but he is far beyond any thing we can now see here;—and if I were to overpraise him, you would be disappointed when he comes—for come he will, be assured. Depend upon it, there never was a young man fortunate enough to serve a young woman, without being

determined to profit by that fortune if he could ; and, at all events, to see the treasure he had saved."

" This is all very silly, Cecile," replied the other : " Petrarch is too grave a character to be won by such trifles. I hear they talked of my beauty ! What folly ! if he expects beauty, he must look to you ; for so lovely a creature never before was seen in the kingdom of France."

" You are determined, Eleonore, to make me as vain as you yourself may well be, since Petrarch endeavours to make himself acceptable to you."

" Acceptable ? I dread to see him, Cecile ! for I know that if he were to ask me to accept his homage, I should say——never mind what : but I feel a presentiment that one kind word from him would be my ruin."

" Well, my dear, it would be a smiling ruin ; and I see it is one that is not much dreaded, with all your little fears at meeting. For my part, I am of a decided character : my father has given me a man's education, and let him look to it. I will tell you fairly, I love a knight, who is a pro-

digy in one way, as Petrarch is in another. He knows I love him ; and if you have common sense, and Petrarch falls in love with you, (which he ought to do,) then take my advice, and give that trifle, your heart, to Franciscus."

On the following day, Eleonore received a long letter from Petrarch ; her reflections on which we will notice in the next chapter.

CHAP. XI.

DREAMS.

THE letter arrived on " sweet St. Agnes' night,"—the 21st of January ; and with trembling hand Eleonore opened the first written communication she had ever received. The blood rushed to her face and heart, and tingled at the points of her fingers. The expressions were kind and friendly, but not warm ; there was a slight allusion to the publication, and an intimation of the certainty of a favorable issue in respect to

the threatened claim. Eleonore was young and timid; but she was susceptible, grateful, and affectionate. She thought, but did not dare to trust her thoughts; and for safety against thinking, determined to hasten to the parlour, and join her friend Cecile, whom she found full of the importance of the evening, of the meaning of which Eleonore was wholly ignorant.

When young female friends meet tête-à-tête, it is well known that they soon become less reserved. Cecile began her instructions. — “ In order to ascertain the affections of a lover, it is necessary first of all to fast; then to take a row of pins, and pull them out one after another, saying a pater-noster during the intervals; and lastly to stick them in your sleeve: by following these regulations, you are sure to dream of the person whom you are destined to love.”

Cecile wished to amuse herself, and easily convinced her friend of the truth of what she said. Eleonore promised to obey her injunctions. The two young friends passed the remainder of the evening to their mutual satisfaction; and when

Eleonore retired to her chamber, Cecile accompanied her, to see the ceremony properly performed. Being satisfied with her pupil's accuracy, Cecile retired to her own bed-room, and went through a similar process.

Eleonore dreamt that she was standing on a rock near a deep basin of water, and that the night was beautifully clear from the brilliancy of the moon and stars, millions of which glittered in the firmament. The scenery of her dream (for she imagined herself in a mountainous dell, surrounded by rocks and woods,) conspired to instil into her breast the soft feelings of love; and she began to sing a favorite Spanish air, which she scarce had finished, before a sweet voice commenced another air with an Italian version of the same words. Anxious to discover the respondent to her song, she made a rapid effort to reach the spot where the songster was concealed; but rapidity only produced danger, and she appeared to whirl round, and at last fell. A sensation of extreme cold and pain succeeded. Dreams are abrupt and unnatural; but subjects of an interest-

ing nature will at times obtrude themselves on our thoughts. Fancy now conveyed Eleonore to a small apartment, where she lay on a humble bed, attended by a weather-beaten woman, and a young man of fair complexion, round features, and gray hair. At this moment she awoke, and found herself bleeding, her arm having been severely lacerated by the pins of St. Agnes.

The lamp of her apartment burnt dimly ; the wind whistled through the corridor ; the Rhone had overflowed its banks ; and the noise of the oars in the streets, which ran nearly level with the bank of the river, was distinctly heard. The appearance was very different from the night of which Eleonore had been dreaming ; and she threw herself upon her bed, angry at the interruption of her dream, annoyed by the sense of pain, but pleased at the remembrance of her fancies :—she slept ;—she dreamt again. We will not here describe what was the purport of her new dream. We cannot command our waking, much less our sleeping thoughts : suffice it to say, that she awoke, after a feverish sleep, flushed and discomposed. She

felt something extraordinary : — she did not know what the feeling was ; and awaited the hour of summons for morning prayers with anxiety.

Cecile was carried in her sleep to the field of battle. She saw her knight waving his sword, and surrounded by a hundred foes : she saw the cavalry galloping ; she saw him kneeling before a dignified soldier, surrounded by troops and banners : the scene changed, and she saw him at her feet. She awoke, and could not again compose herself to sleep : she trimmed her lamp, and endeavoured to amuse herself by writing to her lover.

“ I have dreamt, my Reginald, of you ; in my sleep, I have folded you to my heart : this is St. Agnes’s night ; and from my lonely couch I rise to offer you the fervent protestations of my increased and increasing love. In my dreams I have seen you surrounded by danger, but I have also seen you rewarded for your courage by the noble chief who directs your services. Return, my love, to peaceful Avignon, and there hear me acknowledge that I live but for you alone ; for

‘ Now, now I know what ’tis to truly love.’ ”

Having concluded this brief epistle, Cecile went cautiously to Eleonore's cell, and found her in the situation we have described, from the effect of the mysteries of the saint. Cecile assisted in composing her nerves, and in binding up her wounds. The two friends then threw themselves on the same couch, and each recited to the other how alarmed and how pleased they had been.

CHAP. XII.

THE CONVENT OF ST. CLARA.

ON the morning after the dream, the abbess requested the presence of the two young boarders in the parlour, where they found Petrarch and the Abbot of Fécamp. Petrarch bowed respectfully, and begged to be permitted to say a few words in private. He retired with Eleonore to a large bay window ; and, in passing Cecile, he delivered, unperceived by the rest of the party, a letter from Reginald, which had arrived that morning.

Petrarch, in a hesitating manner, expressed to Eleonore the warm interest he had taken in her welfare ; related the impression made in her favor on the minds of the higher as well as the lower classes ; and then delivered a message from Turquin respecting the threatened law-suit, which prevented his either completing the sale of the property at Carpentras, or purchasing the château of John de l'Isle, which was now to be sold upon advantageous terms. Petrarch then pursued the subject, which was most difficult to speak upon and which related to the confession of Valdez. Eleonore expressed her contrition for the part she had been induced to take, attributing her folly to the evil advice of the sister of her guardian, and to her own youth and inexperience.

“ It was the first time,” said she, “ that I heard I had any pretensions to beauty ; the stranger flattered, and I believed : but I have read in books that your sex even can be won by fair words.”

“ Especially from the lips of fair woman,” replied Petrarch.

“ Well then,” rejoined the lady, “ it appears

to me very natural that women should believe men. I believed that Valdez loved me, and I feared my husband would murder me; I therefore ran away from him, but no guilty thought ever entered my mind. I now see that Valdez was a villain, and I hate him for his deception, and myself for having ever listened to him."

Eleonore now burst into a violent hysterical fit of tears, and the abbot and lady abbess hastened to assist in consoling her: the former was a good-natured man, and an admirer of the sex; the latter knew her boarder was rich, and unhappy; and it seemed possible that she might take the veil.

During this scene, Cecile had read the contents of her letter, and concealed it in her bosom; but being aroused by the grief of her friend and companion, she hastened to give her assistance. When the abbot and Petrarch took their leave, the young ladies retired to their apartment, and each confessed to the other the feelings of her heart.

“My dream,” said Eleonore, “is almost realized. Petrarch is the man I saw, and in whose embraces I swooned: the only difference is in the color of the hair: I cannot say whether it is gratitude or love; but when he kissed my hand, I almost wish he had kissed me as you did last night.”

“Very well for a beginning, Eleonore,” replied Cecile; “you have often ridiculed the passion of love: from the pulsations at your own heart you may now imagine what I feel for ——”

“The Vicomte de Leontin?” said Eleonore, smiling.

“No,” replied Cecile, handing Reginald’s letter.

Eleonore read the epistle, and wished that Petrarch had so avowed his passion. The evening bell summoned the young friends to the chapel; where Eleonore, in the scene before her, forgot the dream and interview, and offered up her orisons with a pure heart; while Cecile was occupied with other thoughts, and neither heard the hymns nor the responses; for her mind wandered to distant scenes, and dwelt on love alone.

CHAP. XIII.

THE COUNT DE MONTAUBAN.

THE Countess Aurélie was occupied with painting, while Petrarch read aloud a poem of Dante, when a messenger galloped into the court-yard of the hotel. The arrival of despatches in those days was considered as an event of great importance. A page in waiting entered the apartment, and inquired for the ambassador.

“The Count,” replied Aurélie, “is in his study with his secretary.”

“It is necessary,” answered the page, “that his excellency should be informed of the arrival of an express from Paris.”

“I will deliver your message to the Count,” said Aurélie; and she hastened to his study.

“Agenor, my love, here is news for you; an express from the King of France.” She saw her

husband and father deeply engaged in conversation, and a secretary transcribing their instructions. “ I beg pardon,” continued she, “ for interrupting your deliberations.”

“ My daughter,” rejoined the Count de Roussillon, “ it is fit time you should be informed as to the subject of our conference. I feel that the tide of life flows daily less strong. It is my intention to return immediately to Roussillon, there to breathe out my last.”

The Countess sank into a seat near the table; Agenor flew to her aid; the secretary ran for water; while the Count calmly proceeded:—

“ I am sorry that my beloved daughter is not better prepared; but we will take another opportunity to speak of this subject, which seems so overpowering to my dear Aurélie.”

He then kissed her forehead: she quickly recovered her self-possession, and threw herself into his arms.

The messenger was admitted, and delivered a packet, the contents of which were as follows:—

“ To the Count Agenor de Montleans:

“ The King has commanded me to inform your excellency, that he has created Reginald de Vavasour Marquis of Montserrent, Count of Montauban, and a peer of France, with a grant of the château and estate attached thereto, in reward of his services in the late war. In case of failure of male issue, the grant is to revert to the crown. His Most Christian Majesty has also commanded that you should present, in private audience, the enclosed letter for his Holiness the Pope.

Signed, “ ROBERT D’ARTOIS,
 “ Comte de Beaumont le Roger.”

A pursuivant arrived with letters from Count Rodolphe, or, more properly speaking, with news of the Count; and information of the departure of Reginald, of the towns taken, and other incidents of the war.

When Aurélie again visited the convent, she expressed her surprise that the courier of Count Rodolphe had arrived before De Vavasour, whose

rapidity of movement was well known. Cecile, on this, flushed to so violent a degree, that her friend was infinitely surprised. She was, however, soon relieved from this her first fit of passion by a gush of tears; and, by the advice of her friends, retired to her own chamber.

“ The conduct of Mademoiselle de Cominges,” said Aurélie, “ is wholly unaccountable, unless she is in love with this all-conquering hero.”

When Aurélie said this, she looked at Eleonore, as if she would read her inmost thoughts.

“ Do not regard me in that manner,” exclaimed the latter; “ you will frighten me very much. I had rather tell you all I know.”

“ No,” replied Aurélie; “ that would not be honorable. I own that I dread the effect of love on such an ardent character: Reginald appeared to me to have no heart; but Cecile may have found out the secret, and converted stone into a more flexible substance. I think, however, she will have time to cure herself of an unfortunate predilection, if such should be its nature; for I fear

De Vavasour is either sick, or—a prisoner, I would say, but that I believe him too daring to yield: I have not courage to use the other word.”

“Do you mean dead, Countess?” ejaculated Eleonore. “Heaven forbid!”

“I say Amen!” rejoined the Countess; “but we must be prepared for the worst.”

When Eleonore, on the departure of her visitor, rejoined her friend, she was afraid of repeating the latter part of this conversation; but by degrees Cecile gained from her all that had been said.

“If sick, or —— I cannot speak the word! How much,” said Cecile, “have I wronged my knight by my anger! for shame, Cecile! Conquer thy temper!”

After a long pause, occupied in deep thought, Cecile again spoke:—

“If Reginald return not in three days, or letters arrive not from him, I will seek him in person. Enguerrand shall be my guide.”

“And would you trust your beautiful person to a robber?”

“Yes, for Reginald’s sake, I would venture

my life. Robbers are not always ruffians. En-guerrand respects De Vavasour; and, when I avow to him what I feel, if the robber be a man, he will pity, protect, and assist me: if I remain long in my present state of agitation, my heart will be scorched to ashes, and my brain a ball of fire."

Eleonore, although she thought some accident had delayed the hero, yet prophesied a favorable issue.

"Recollect our dreams," said she; "you know I have seen my lover, and you embraced yours."

"Yes," rejoined the other; "but I have not great confidence in dreams; I played with St. Agnes for your sake, and she may punish me for my folly."

CHAP. XIV.

THE RETURN.

THE alarm occasioned by the non-arrival of Sir Reginald subsided on the appearance of Hawkwood, with letters for Petrarch. It was well known that the roads were infested with banditti, and that many parties were hastening from different quarters to sustain the efforts of Les Bâtards. The friends of Reginald, therefore, were fearful that through excess of courage he had ventured without sufficient escort, and had perished. The letters were dated from Beziers. There was one enclosed for Cecile, full, as usual, of love and protestations.

He had been detained by a fever, brought on from over exertion, in his anxiety to reach Avignon, and embrace his first love. He had been treated with great kindness by the Vicomte de Beziers, and spoke of the beauty of the situation

and fineness of the climate ; concluding with a description of the surrounding country.

Reginald did not think it necessary to speak of the fair niece of the viscount, whose attentions, during his illness, had been more agreeable to him, than they possibly might prove, when recounted to the enamoured Cecile.

On the following day a messenger from Petrarch desired to speak with Eleonore. On her entrance, some papers were presented to her, which announced the final conclusion of the sale and purchase ; and Petrarch requested that she would, on the first fine day, ride out, and take possession of the Château de l'Isle, as lady of the soil : it was necessary, however, to have the lady abbess's permission. Cecile entered.

“ I have a letter also,” said the messenger, “ for Mademoiselle de Cominges.”

There was something in the tone of voice which struck upon the chord of memory. Cecile darted forward to receive the letter, — looked, knew, and threw herself into the arms of Reginald !

A noise alarmed the trio :—it announced the

lady abbess, who had received a letter from the Abbot of Fécamp, requesting, on the part of Petrarch, her legal adviser, and le Maitre Turquin, her guardian, permission for Eleonore to have free egress and ingress. The postscript gently hinted, that if this request was not complied with, the rich widow would be advised by her friends to withdraw herself from Santa Clara. The abbot thus concluded: "As it would not be correct for a young woman to leave the convent alone, I beg you, my Lady Abbess, to allow one of the parlour boarders to be her companion: and I may name Mademoiselle de Cominges, her particular friend."

On the lady abbess's arrival, Eleonore timidly informed her, that she had pressing business to attend to as early as possible, and begged that she might take advantage of the first opportunity.

The lady abbess graciously assented, and added, that by the request of her well-beloved brother and friend the abbot, Mademoiselle de Cominges had permission to be her companion. "Which day," pursued the abbess, "does Madame choose to name for her setting forth?"

“ You had better fix to-morrow,” said Cecile ;
“ for the weather is fine, and your business is of
consequence : you know you ought to arrange it
as speedily as possible.”

“ I fear,” said the lately-arrived messenger,
“ that the Signor Petrarch will be engaged to-
morrow, as the Pope expects a young knight of
France, the Count of Montauban, to make his en-
trée, and whose attendant I am.”

“ Pray, young sir, who is your master ?” said
the abbess.

“ The King of France.”

“ But who is the Count whom you are to at-
tend ? and tell me the reason why the Pope intends
to receive him with such distinction.”

“ It is said, Madame, that his holiness was
strongly interested in the late war ; and on the de-
parture of the knight, bestowed on him a relic,
which possibly has, with other gifts, inspired him
to tread the field of glory. The King of France
has honored the knight with the title of Montau-
ban ; and his holiness has notified his intention to
bestow on the knight-banneret an image of the

Virgin in diamonds, as a mark of his special favor, and in remembrance of the cause for which he fought."

Cecile inquired if he had any other name.

"Yes, Mademoiselle, he is called De Vava-sour."

"What!" said the abbess, "the handsome Frenchman that escorted the noble Count Agenor de Montleans, whose father-in-law has been so bountiful to our house of Santa Clara?"

"Of his person, Madame, it would not become a soldier to speak; but you have otherwise identified the knight. He is expected to sleep at Nismes this night, and reach Avignon to-morrow noon."

The Countess Aurélie was announced, and the messenger showed great anxiety to depart. While the lady abbess went to receive her, Cecile contrived to give her lover a superb ring.

"The Pope's gift," said Reginald, "is destined for the loveliest of her sex. I will return this evening."

"But how?" asked Cecile: "and if you have

to ride to Nismes to-night, you will be tired, and not be in good looks to-morrow. If you must go to Nismes, go at once."

As Aurélie entered the room, the messenger slipped past her, and was in the street in a moment. The object of the Countess's visit was to invite the ladies to pass the next day with her.—
"There is a gallery, cushioned and curtained," said she, "in preparation for the ambassador's lady, and it would be very dull to sit there alone. You know that, in the Pope's presence, the ladies and gentlemen must be separated." The ladies of course assented.

CHAP. XV.

THE RECEPTION.

AT the hour appointed for the entrée into Avignon, the Pope's guards, who looked more like the clowns of dramatic fiction than men at arms, were formed in a semicircle in front of the bridge: they lowered their pikes; the populace shouted; and Reginald passed on, helmet in hand. At the principal gate of entrance, Agenor, attended by his household, and several of the domestics and officers of his holiness, waited to receive him.

Our hero was received by Pope John with marked affection. "My son," exclaimed he, "our prayers have been heard:—you return to us as one of the preservers of France, and defenders of our holy faith. Take this gift, which I offer in memorial of your manly deeds in behalf of maiden purity against brutal outrage; and may you long live, the ornament and support of the court and

power of Charles of France, our beloved son and defender !”

Having said this, John placed around the neck of Reginald the chain, from which was suspended the figure of the Virgin before mentioned. Looking towards the gallery, Reginald kissed the splendid image. In vain did he endeavour to obtain a view of the fair Cecile: she had carefully concealed herself; but was so placed as to be able to gaze without interruption on the object of her fond affection. At the residence of Agenor, the favored knight was received with that warmth of friendship which he merited, and was presented in form to the two ladies of the convent. When the visitors retired to arrange their dresses, Reginald saw a door open, which he pretended to mistake for that of his own chamber; and on entering, was received with open arms by Cecile. Fearful of being observed, he hastily transferred the gift of the Pope, and promised to meet his beloved at the Château de l'Isle on the following day.

Wishing to escape observation, the ladies set out from the convent at a very early hour; but it

was late in the day ere Reginald and Franciscus arrived.

“ You are two most ungallant swains,” said Cecile: “ here have we been counting the weary hours, and wondering how the essence of chivalry and flower of poetry could be absent from such loveliness and such loneliness; for verily this is a most secluded spot. Come, Sir Knight, you, as the most daring, shall first be put on trial.”

Franciscus begged Eleonore to intercede in their favor, and to assuage the anger of the much-slighted and forlorn damsel. Reginald interrupted this submissive strain, by stating that popes will be masters of the time of others as well as their own; but that he ought not to complain, for he had been well rewarded.

“ Has John, for once in his life, acted liberally ?” inquired Cecile.

“ He has more than repaid me,” answered De Vavasour, “ for the expenses incurred in my late affair; and although I could have dispensed with the summons, yet as it will enable me to make

certain purchases of jewels which Hiriam the Jew has for sale ——”

“ I suppose,” said Cecile, smiling, “ we must pardon these wanderers from the duty of allegiance to our sovereign beauty, and lay the fault at the door of His Holiness, whose sins,—commissions or omissions,—must not by us be numbered.”

Having restored Reginald to favor, Cecile took his arm, and wandered through the wilderness which had been intended for a plaisance. Franciscus accompanied, and for some time scarcely noticed Eleonore: however, the youthful poet was handsome, and perhaps vain of his beauty. Eleonore expressed her admiration of his talents, his taste, his voice; and she might, had she possessed sufficient courage, have acknowledged that she admired the man more than the scholar. But Eleonore was not a Cecile. It was moon-light, however, and beautifully calm; and Petrarch felt a soft sensation. It was not love. Was it pity? Pity (as we have before had occasion to observe) is “ akin to love;” and friendship and moon-light

are perhaps equally allied to it. No matter! Petrarch repeated those lines of Dionysius, which have in our own day been so beautifully translated.

“ I wish I could like Zephyr steal,
To wanton o’er thy mazy vest,
And thou wouldst ope thy bosom veil,
And take me, panting, to thy breast.

“ I wish I might a rose-bud grow,
And thou wouldst cull me from the bower,
And place me on that breast of snow,
Where I would bloom,—a wintry flower.

“ I wish I were the lily’s leaf,
To fade upon that bosom warm ;
There I should wither, pale and brief,
The trophy of thy fairer form !”

Eleonore trembled ; but though Petrarch pressed her hand, her veil concealed her blushes. A bell tolled the hour of nine. Eleonore rose from her seat, and turned towards the house.

“ Why do you fly me, Eleonore ?” tenderly asked Franciscus.

“ I owe you too much !” replied she : “ I must not stay.” Cecile passed by, leaning on

the arm of Reginald, and was joined by Eleonore. The two ladies conversed together, and entered the house, leaving Reginald with Petrarch.

“What makes you so downcast, my dear friend?” said the former: “have you been repulsed by the ungrateful fair, whose fame and fortune you have so bravely defended?—who, if there was any gratitude in the world, ought to say, ‘Let him who wins wear!’”

“I was moralizing, Reginald,” replied the poet, “on the impropriety of allowing young persons to be thrown into the way of temptation. I truly believe that Eleonore is as grateful as she is amiable: without feeling for her a spark of love, I might have yielded to temptation, and sacrificed her honor at the shrine of my appetite: this would not have been well. There is some excuse to the mind of youth, though it can be none with a religious, or even with a moral man, that, blinded by love, mortals yield to opportunity and temptation;—but *without* love, it would not be manly, it would not be honorable.”

“ Well, Franciscus,” answered De Vavasour, “ it seems your morality has saved your conscience : as for me, I would suffer death for my beloved ; and I do not know whose feelings are the strongest, or which of us are most delighted with the word *opportunity* : and as for temptation, I think we might, at all events, agree, it should be voted mutual.”

“ Consider, Reginald, that you are now a soldier, distinguished by your sovereign, and may soon be called on to take your seat as a peer of France. You must not, for the sake of momentary indulgence, sacrifice your high name at the altar of the earthly Venus. You are destined to be the husband of a princess : thousands of human beings will be at your disposal : you will be (at least it is in your power to be,) every thing great and noble ; and will you leave the golden path of virtue and honor, to tread upon the slippery one of vice and pleasure ?”

“ Do not, my friend, call love vice. I love Cecile, and she loves me : she is to be married to one whom she does not know, and I to one

whom I never saw: until our time arrives, do let us pass it happily, without the interruption of your cold morality."

"Reginald, you stand upon a precipice. Upon my soul, I believe, if Eleonore had said she admired you more than all mankind, that you would ——"

"Petrarch, if Cecile says so, I'll stop her mouth with ——"

"Pray, Reginald, stop your own; for here come the fair subjects of our argument."

"If we repeat it, Petrarch," concluded Reginald, laughing, "I'll wager love against morality for a helmet plume."

CHAP. XVI.

NEWS FROM COURT.

CECILE and Eleonore had formed plans of improvement for the hitherto-neglected château and gardens, but they were prevented from personally inspecting the progress of the workmen by continual rains. Reginald found time therefore to read and reply to the following letter from Robert d'Artois :

“ The Queen of England has succeeded in obtaining for her son the government of the kingdom; but it pains me to think that a daughter of France, and a wife, should have sanctioned such disrespectful conduct as that of Trussel, who, in the name of the parliament, declared that he deprived Edward of the royal authority. This insolent and rebellious attack has been followed by the imprisonment of the king, and the nomination of

the young prince as his successor. Edward refused to accept the crown, unless willingly surrendered by his father.

“The king sent his abdication ; and, on account of the youth of Edward, the nobles in parliament assembled have named a council of twelve to direct the state affairs, at the head of which is Henry Earl of Lancaster. During the rejoicings which will follow Edward’s coronation, it is fitting and proper that you should hasten to England, and pay your personal respects to the new monarch. It will be highly advantageous to France that a good understanding should be created between the two courts ; and though you are young in years, yet you are not young in knowledge, and are better adapted for the court of England than most of our experienced statesmen.”

The letter contained some other matters of importance, which Reginald communicated to Francis, but which it is not necessary to notice at present.

There were letters also from the primate and Lorenzo. The former, among many other circum-

stances, mentioned a visit he had received from the Dauphin.

“ I trust, my son,” wrote he, “ that every thing will be arranged amicably. I feel tired of public life, and would willingly resign my high station, were it possible to enjoy, in retirement, the society of those to whom I am so firmly attached.” Subsequently, the prince alluded, as follows, to part of a conversation with the Dauphin.

“ The room into which his highness was ushered was the saloon. I seldom enter it ; for the profile reminds me too forcibly of the misfortunes of my friend, whom you so much resemble, and whom I believe to be your gallant father. The Dauphin is convinced of the relationship, and thinks, if you were now to visit the court of London, the secret may be discovered.”

The letter from Lorenzo was on military matters.

“ Since your departure, my general, I have had the good fortune to please old Calderos, by affording him assistance at a critical moment. I have had enough of fatigue to wish myself at home ; but Count Rodolphe is quite another being :

he is every where and every thing ; and expressed great sorrow that our work is finished, and that we are to return home. For my part, I shall view the old towers of Vienne with as much joy as my brother Rodolphe ought to feel at the sight of his little Rosalie."

CHAP. XVII.

THE FOUNTAIN OF VAUCLUSE.

THE weather again brightened up, and Cecile proposed a visit to the château of Eleonore. Some of the rooms were made habitable, and the visitors were too happy in their unrestrained meeting to require luxurious accommodation.

" Eleonore," said Cecile, " you have not done the honors of your fountain, or I should more properly call it, that of our good bishop."

" Fountain !" replied Eleonore ; " what do you mean ?"

“ Why,” returned her friend, “ the fountain of the closed valley.”

“ I have never visited it.”

“ I suppose you are afraid of the badness of the roads:—it is certainly at the risk of your fair neck ; but to horse, gentlemen; and do you, Reginald, take Eleonore’s palfrey by the bridle.”

“ My page,” replied Reginald, “ is more skilful, and shall therefore guard our fair friend from danger.”

By such an arrangement, Franciscus could converse with his friend, and Reginald with his love. After a fatiguing ride, they reached the stream, since become so famous, and which now dashed over its pebbled bed. A sudden turn brought the party in view of the fountain.

It appeared a scene of enchantment. Beneath a lofty mountain, surrounded by rocks and woods, the waters rushed from the bowels of the earth, and the spray appeared almost to touch the loftiest trees. The tributary streams burst forth from the rocks to aid in furnishing La Sorga, with a ra-

pidity and plenitude of power that threatened to overwhelm the animals peacefully grazing upon its mossy banks; but as active, though not so powerful, as the transparent stream, they instinctively provided themselves with sure resting ground; and, like our enraptured visitors, seemed to gaze on the sublime and romantic valley. Above the woods stood the castle of the bishop of Ca-vaillon, which appeared conscious of its grandeur; and brightened by the brilliant sun-shine, its towers seemed to smile benignantly over the splendid scene.

“ Here,” said Petrarch, “ will I build a humble retreat for the two faithful followers who have survived my parents: and here will I, if the world frowns on me, retire to think of heavenly instead of earthly matters.” After these few words, he fell into a train of thought.

“ I will assail that castle,” cried Reginald; and he sprung from rock to rock with the nimbleness of the herds that flew before him.

“ You remember St. Agnes’s night, Cecile?” inquired Eleonore.

“ Yes, my poor wounded damsel,” rejoined the girl.

“ This spot reminds me of my dream.”

“ And you have before discovered your lover?”

“ Hush, Cecile!—not so loud.”

“ But what ails Franciscus?”

The sky had changed its appearance, and become lowering, which added to the sublimity of the scene.

“ What makes you look so pale?” pursued Eleonore, addressing the poet.

“ Pale, Madam?” said Petrarch.

“ You are ill, my friend!” anxiously exclaimed Eleonore; “ speak.”

A flash of lightning was followed by a tremendous clap of thunder. Petrarch threw himself beneath a tree, while Cecile and Eleonore ran to bring some water from the brook. The second flash was more vivid than the first; and before Cecile could reach the spot where Petrarch lay, the tree was struck, and its crashing branches covered the body of the terror-struck poet.

Reginald had reached his object just as the

storm commenced. He hastily sent a peasant, who was working near the castle, to inform the dignitary that there were ladies near his residence, and then flew to aid the alarmed damsels, whom he found endeavouring to extricate Petrarch from his perilous situation. With the assistance of some of the bishop's retainers, the ponderous branches were removed, and Petrarch was carried to the castle. By the care of the chaplain, who was skilled in medicine, the nerves of the unfortunate sufferer were restored to tranquillity; and the bishop, proud of having so distinguished a guest as the Marquis of Montserrent under his roof, exerted himself to make the castle as agreeable as possible. The following day, Petrarch was sufficiently restored to be enabled to ride, and the party returned to Avignon.

CHAP. XVIII.

AN ADVENTURE.

THE storm had cleared the atmosphere, and the blue sky and balmy air of a southern April now tempted the ladies to propose various parties of pleasure. As they had not visited the Pont du Garde, Hawkwood was ordered to prepare a rustic collation for the following day.

Aurélié declined the invitation, on account of her father's health; and Agenor was engaged in an affair of moment.

The ladies left the convent, attended only by the gentleman-usher of Cecile; and Reginald and Petrarch met them at the hunting-lodge of Count Agenor.

Hawkwood had selected a secluded spot above the bridge, and, upon the repast being ended, he strolled away, in order not to interrupt the familiarity of their conversation. Eleonore made a

sketch of the beautiful spot, while Petrarch read from Ovid the epistle of Dido, ending with

*Certus es ire tamen, miseramque relinquere Dido ;
Atque îdem venti vela fidemque ferent.*

The ladies very naturally attacked the faithless swain, and thought with compassion of the time when—

“ The queen, whom sense of honor could not move,
No longer made a secret of her love,
But call’d it marriage ; by that specious name
To veil the crime, and sanctify the shame.”

Reginald made a remark which might thus be explained :

“ *Pauvre Didon ! où t’a réduite
De tes maris le triste sort !
L’un, en mourant, cause ta fuite ;
L’autre, en fuyant, cause ta mort.*”

Petrarch was thoughtful ; at last he said, “ It was her misfortune—his destiny ! for Æneas was forced to obey the will of Heaven !”

Eleonore treasured up these words in her mind. A general silence followed this observation, which was interrupted by a party, who suddenly burst

from concealment, seized and disarmed Reginald, and made the whole company captive. The prizes were borne off in haste: not a word was said, neither was insult nor ill usage offered. They were conducted, through a thick covert, to a species of rural theatre, fenced closely round with cypress trees. When once entered, it was impossible to ascertain the point of ingress. Reginald suppressed his rage, but bit his lips, and strode up and down the area: Petrarch and Eleonore seated themselves upon one of the banks of turf, — the latter incapable of speaking from terror. Cecile whispered Reginald, “ You had better, my love, let the thunder-cloud have vent.”

The following discourse attracted their notice; and Reginald, who understood it, listened with anxious attention, while Cecile constantly asked,—
“ What is it they say?”

“ According to your orders, captain,” said one, “ we have treated the party civilly.”

“ How many are there, and of what kind?” was the rejoinder.

“Two men and two women; noble-looking, young, and handsome.”

“The women are fairly my prizes; and the disposal of the men I give to the band, to be treated as lawful prisoners.”

“One of them had a sword, though we did not give him time to use it: he will be condemned to death; for I can swear he himself killed some forty of our people in the war with those noble fellows, *Les Bâtards*.”

“They certainly were,” replied the captain, “as fine a band of villains as ever graced or disgraced the world; but they suited my purpose. Your being an Englishman saved you at that time from being hanged; and, if I mistake not, Redhurst, you were saved by the interference of the brave De Vavasour.—These prisoners speak French?”

“Yes, and they can read Latin.”

“Well, reading Latin is an odd method of amusing females: I wager they are English, from their composure. Were they French, they would

swear one minute, stamp the next, then sing, and then dance: but the English, when they have had their dinners, take the mischances of the world very coolly, and with as tolerable patience as travellers can be expected to use. I will visit them: they will not require another meal this evening, and our provisions run very short. The devil take the carême, as they call it!"

The captain entered the area, and was much amused with the arrangement of his prisoners: Petrarch reclined on the grass, reading his favorite Ovid; Eleonore leant upon her hand, pale as a ghost, and evidently too much alarmed to attend to any thing; Reginald paced hastily up and down; while Cecile continued her raillery, ignorant of the serious intentions of the brigands. Suddenly she said, "Here comes our master."

The captain took off his bonnet, and bowed respectfully to the ladies, whose lips he might have commanded.

"Your men, captain," said Reginald, "have treated us kindly: you are, if I mistake not, the famous Enguerrand?"

“ Sir Reginald has rightly guessed,” answered the robber chief.

“ Then faith has been kept: now I demand my sword; and if you even cast it into the air, rely upon it I shall grasp it, as well as you did yours in the water.”

“ Willingly I return it, brave knight,” replied Enguerrand: he whistled:—two men appeared, and Enguerrand ordered the weapon to be restored.

“ Now, Sir Reginald,” added he, “ my painful duty commences: in order to obtain the direction of these men, I have been obliged to give my oath, affirmed by a cross above my heart, burnt in with my own blood, to obey their laws. Those laws you have offended, and carelessly you have become a prisoner: I must summon those men, (who should be your slaves,) to be your judges; but as for this gentleman, and the damsels, they may retire: they have freedom to depart.”

The band being summoned, a council of twelve was soon formed, and the captain took his seat.

Eleonore in vain endeavoured to persuade Petrarch to remove her from a scene which terrified

her exceedingly: Cecile declared that she would share the fate of her knight, even if it were death. The accuser of Sir Reginald appeared, and stated the case.

“ You, sir,” said the captain, “ are the Marquis of Montserrent, and commanded the attack, at the battle of Saintes, against certain gentlemen called *Les Bâtards* ?”

“ Yes,” answered Reginald, “ and I defeated them.”

“ You, perhaps, were not aware that they were our friends and allies ?”

“ No: but had I known they were the allies of the devil himself, I should have cared just as little for their infamous lives: and if I am to die, hack me to pieces with your swords where I now stand, for no force shall move me from this spot.”

The captain stated, in Provençal, to the twelve, that the knight acknowledged the accusation to be true.

“ Before you decide, brother soldiers,” continued he, “ you ought to know that this is the person who released several of our party who were captured at

the bridge, and whom he might have punished with death. He also saved the life of the very person who now accuses him ; and, believe me, my friends, that all the English, as well as all the strangers who passed for English, owe their lives to this your brave prisoner."

The men consulted, and at last declared that the knight was a lawful prisoner, but placed him at the disposal of their captain.

" Sir knight," said Enguerrand, " I owe you a debt of gratitude : on one condition you are free ; viz. that you should pay ransom, the amount of which I leave to your own means and discretion."

" If you will meet me, Enguerrand," answered our hero, " on the morning after to-morrow, at the hunting-lodge of the Count de Montleans, I will bring such a sum as this lady shall fix as the value of my life."

" Do not leave it to me," said Cecile ; " for if you do, you will be ruined."

Enguerrand smiled ; and advancing to Reginald, said, " Here is a silver chain and whistle : whenever you want me or my comrades, blow twice on

this; and if they are within hearing, you shall be obeyed."

In leaving the ground, Reginald noticed, as he passed along, the strength and equipments of the band; and decided in his own mind, that Enguerand, with his followers, might be turned to good purposes. At the cave they found Hawkwood, Hobson, and the horses, and returned to the lodge, where the usher received them: refreshment and rest were necessary for the timid Eleonore; and, leaving Petrarch to his thoughts, Reginald accompanied Cecile. "Now the business is over, Reginald," said the latter, "it must be owned we were in rather an unpleasant situation."

"Very unpleasant," replied Reginald; "for the captain had determined to possess himself of his fair prizes."

"Do not mention the horrid idea," exclaimed Cecile: "he might have frightened poor Eleonore into compliance; but Cecile will dispose of her person to whom she chooses, or part with her life."

On their return to the lodge, they were received with congratulations by Agenor and Aurélie; and

after passing an agreeable evening, the Countess escorted her friends to their convent, and Reginald and Petrarch visited Giacomo Colonna.

CHAP. XIX.

THE SIXTH OF APRIL.

LITTLE did Petrarch think, on the morning of this eventful day, equally important to himself and to the lovers of poetry, that, ere the sun had hid his fiery beams in the western horizon, he should feel pangs even more severe than those which agitated the bosom of the love-sick Eleonore. Inspired by those sentiments of religion produced on good minds during the holy week, Petrarch went, at the first hour of morning-service, to the church of Santa Clara.

Petrarch, in his celebrated epistle to posterity, says, “*Juventa corripuit* ;” but we can no where find in him the libertine or profligate. On the contrary, we discover, in his life, the intelligent

philosopher, the intrepid patriot, the scorner of vice, the scourge of profligacy, and the exposor of crimes hidden from the world by priestly hypocrisy. Let us recollect that it was in the midst of France, in a town where courts of love were held sacred,—with a mind full of imagination, and restlessly wandering after fancied perfection,—full also of the fire of poetry, which had been already rekindled in Italy,—that Petrarch, at the age of twenty-three, beheld Laura, who had then not completed her nineteenth year. It was in the church of St. Clara he first met those eyes which long he delighted to gaze on; and neither the solemnity of the day, nor the sanctity of the place, could save him from the assaults of love.

When Laura left the church, he followed her to her home, gazing at a respectful distance, admiring the grace of her deportment, and the rich luxuriance of her waving tresses. Thus he has written :

“ Erano i capei d’ oro all’ aura sparsi,
Che ’n mille dolci nodi gli avvolgea;
E ’l vago lume oltra misura ardea
Di que’ begli occhi——

Non era l' andar suo cosa mortale,
Ma d' angelica forma."

When Petrarch was returning to his home, he met Giacomo Colonna, who greeted him as he passed; but his salutation was not returned. Colonna followed him unperceived, and they both entered the house. Petrarch hastened to his chamber, threw himself on a couch, and seemed withdrawn from the common objects of the world.

"Heavenly form! angelic woman! tenderness of expression! grace of movement! divine beauty!" followed each other in flowing phrase of rhapsody. At last Giacomo said:—

"Petrarch, my friend, are you sane?"

"Am I alive, or do I dream?" ejaculated the poet.

"That you are alive, my loved friend, is true; but whether you dream, or have lost your senses, is beyond my poor powers of comprehension."

"I have lost my heart, my soul, my sense: I live only in the hope of again seeing one who is to me the star of my destiny. My dreams are accomplished; my fate is sealed. In what part of

heaven was the model found from which Nature has formed that lovely, bewitching face?"

"Tell me, Petrarch, seriously, is the being you thus incline to worship, one of imagination, or of real flesh and blood? We have heard that the representation of the beauteous Virgin was painted from the ideal loveliness beheld, in a dream, by one of the saints of our church."

"It was in a church I saw the saint of whom I rave."

"Is she an unknown saint?"

"To me unknown, but the place of her residence I can well describe: over the portal there is an escutcheon, with a griffin and sword."

"It belongs to the wealthy family of De Sade, the head of which has been married about a year to the lady you saw—to the lovely Laura de Noves. They say she is a virtuous young woman, but not suited to the taste of her husband."

"He must be a monster if he does not adore her; and if she dies, and he outlives her, farewell to the existence of idolatrous love!"

"If any accident happens to the lovely Laura,

I would wager that the husband will soon find another wife to manage his household, and preside at his table."

"Can there be such stoic coldness in the heart of man? O Laura, Laura, beloved Laura! why did cruel destiny throw you into the arms of one so little worthy of possessing such charms!"

Giacomo, finding his friend more composed, left him to the indulgence of his thoughts; hoping that the flame which had been so suddenly and so violently kindled, would burn itself as suddenly out: but he did not know the character of Petrarch. With a heart formed for the most ardent passion, the young poet was to this moment free from love. On his first interview with Eleonore, whom he was more than prepared to admire, he felt nothing but disappointment: his expectations had been raised, his imagination fired; he fancied the victim of treachery to be an angel of beauty, and he found a timid, and, as he thought, insipid creature. Now a vision of light had burst upon him; and without hesitation, he devoted himself mentally and bodily to the worship of this paragon of her sex. Various

were the plans he conceived for making himself and his passion known to the fascinating fair: he passed the day without food; but his imagination, by abstinence, was increased instead of diminished: he repeated aloud some passages from Sappho's impassioned epistle to Phaon.

“ If Sappho lives in poetry, why should not she who is ten times more beautiful than all the Grecians ?”

“ Let Muses teach me all their softest lays,
And the wide world resound with Laura's praise;”

might have served to express Petrarch's determination to surpass the modern, and rival the ancient amatory poets.

CHAP. XX.

LAURA.

THE sensations of the lovely object of Petrarch's adoration were of a mixed kind, as she retired from the church of Santa Clara, where her devotions had certainly been interrupted by the accidental encounter of eyes. We have mentioned that Petrarch was considered very handsome, and Laura was not blind; but Laura's heart was formed of different materials from that of her lover. It is true that she was young, and married to a person who possessed no positive merit; but she had been religiously educated, and however far she might permit herself to go in the acknowledgment of her unknown admirer's personal attractions, or however far her vanity might feel satisfied at his marked approbation;—yet she did not feel one spark of love.

Days passed away before she saw or heard of

the man whose constant thoughts were occupied with her alone. She was the absolute sovereign of his mind, his affections, his repose. Petrarch called to mind repeatedly the Grecian form of head, the softness of eyes, the rosiness of mouth, and the white pearls which were enclosed within its ruby barriers;—the whiteness of hand, the lightness of foot, (both of which were particularly small,) the clear and harmonious voice which he had heard in the responses, and which made its passage to the heart by the most direct way; the open and cheerful countenance, the shape, the air, the grace, of Laura.

Petrarch had confessed to Reginald his weakness, his passion, and the hopelessness of his love. He begged of him to break the news of his destiny,—for destiny he felt it was,—to the amiable, kind-hearted, but to him, uninteresting Eleonore. The anxiety which he had felt for her situation had insensibly declined; and though he praised her for the efforts she made to improve her mind, yet he could not but admit to himself that she was nothing more than a love-sick girl.

Petrarch was requested to visit the family of Agenor ; but the melancholy, dispirited lover declined the invitation, and related to Agenor his tale of woe. He wrote of the charms which we have described, but did not mention the name of the possessor ; and sent some lines to Aurélie, which she read aloud. It happened, that there were two ladies present ; one of whom, *Mademoiselle de Cominges*, was passionately fond of poetry, and particularly of that which is called amatory. The other lady was not devoted to the charms of composition ; but she was anxious to know who the lady so celebrated was, and whether or not she resided in *Avignon*.

“ Who she is, we do not know,” answered Aurélie ; “ but here is her description.”

Madame de Sade was the person who inquired, and possibly suspected that the description bore some allusion to herself : she perhaps also thought that the writer was the young man whom she saw at *Santa Clara*.

“ Who is the author, Madame ?” asked she.

“ Petrarch,” was the reply.

Laura expressed a wish to see a person so celebrated as Petrarch, from his display of legal knowledge at Carpentras, as well as his general talents. Cecile appeared much disconcerted at the mention of the trial, and annoyed, probably, by the alteration which had taken place in the conduct of Petrarch. She declined being of the party arranged for the following day, because Madame de Sade was to be present; and she fully determined that Reginald should be also one of the absentees: this she imagined would be a great source of mortification to Aurélie. Unfortunately, however, for Cecile's plans, the messenger she sent was ordered not to deliver her letter into any other hands, save those of De Vavasour, and he was absent. Five times the messenger returned; but no signs of our hero. Cecile, tired of sending, determined she would not receive him, when next he visited the convent.

Reginald, quite ignorant of his fair mistress's intentions or wishes, determined to visit her the instant he could leave the hotel. To him was intrusted the management of Petrarch; and with

great difficulty, assisted by Giacomo Colonna, he succeeded in bringing him to the ambassador's. The party had assembled when Reginald was announced, and to Aurélie's satisfaction his friend accompanied him. Petrarch was studiously attired, and we may say, in the language of vulgar panegyric, though pallid, he never appeared to greater advantage. When the friends entered, Madame de Sade saw only the princely-looking knight; Petrarch saw nothing but Laura. It would be difficult to express the delight which he felt when Aurélie presented him as the friend and fellow-scholar of her husband.

Agenor entered into a political discussion with Monsieur de Sade; and Petrarch, anxious to shine before the object of his adoration, took a distinguished lead in the conversation. He spoke like a patriot and statesman; he reviewed with clearness and rapidity the affairs of Germany and Italy; and having, in as brief space as possible, pointed out the errors of the past, he satisfactorily showed the speediest and safest method of insuring prosperity for the future.—Then turning to Laura, he

said, “ Why dwell upon so painful a topic as a country deprived of its natural rights, a country without hope,—when there is before me a subject so worthy of contemplation ? You appeared to listen with interest to the sad tale ; and yet you are too young and too handsome to dim the lustre of those fine eyes, by weeping over the fallen liberties of man.”

“ I listened more to the words and tone of the speaker than to the subject,” replied Laura : “ I am ignorant of the situation of Italy, and therefore could not venture to express, or even harbour a thought : but I had heard of the eloquence and learning of the speaker ; and seeing the attention of my husband so much occupied, felt convinced that the sentiments were as just as the manner they were delivered in was pleasing.”

“ Had I thought my words worthy your notice,” said Petrarch, “ I could have spoken for ever : man may feel a pride in convincing his fellow-man of the truth of his opinions ; but it is ecstacy to obtain the attention and approbation of a lovely woman.”

“ There are, I fear, very few lovely women, as you call them,” answered Laura, “ whose attention and approbation such a speaker would not ensure. Have you not stood forth as the champion of the sex? have you not, in a learned composition, entered into our minutest feelings, and spoken with a delicacy of truth and elegance of compliment sufficient to make you worshipped as the defender of those, who have been too often regarded only as the slaves of men? but I am speaking too warmly: you will conceive, perhaps, that I wish to flatter,—that I wish to ——”

“ What you may wish to do,” said Petrarch, “ I cannot divine, but I know the extent of your power.”

Monsieur de Sade appealed to Petrarch on a point of discussion relative to Florence; and a conversation, which was becoming interesting to both parties, was changed to a dry detail concerning Guelfs and Ghibellines.

The hostess soon after joined the party, leaning on the arm of Reginald; and again politics gave way before the pleasures of more elegant conversation.

“ I fear, Franciscus,” observed she, “ you think, as our friend the abbot does, that our party is intolerably dull without Mademoiselle de Cominges : for my part, I shall quarrel with Madame Eleonore for keeping her from us.”

Petrarch and Reginald exchanged looks, and Madame de Sade observed that each changed color.

“ I should speak as falsely as unpolitely,” said Petrarch, “ if I did not declare this to be the most agreeable company I ever mixed in ; and let me add, Countess Aurélie, that the pleasure is as great as unexpected. I came with a countenance as desponding as our friend Reginald now wears :” (this was said in an under-tone.)

Aurélie looked at her knight, and decided, after some little hesitation, that he was alive.

“ I think,” said she, “ if Cecile saw you now, she would not believe you to be the same person she described as the hero of romance, ready with your single arm to immolate a host of foes. I will send for my pencil, and make a sketch of you.”

This the Countess faithfully performed, and

writing under it, "Where there is no sun, there is no shade,"—sent a messenger with it to the convent.

This sally had an effect very different from what was expected. At the sight of so doleful a figure, (for Aurélie had expressed vacancy, languor, and ennui in every line,) Cecile burst into fits of laughter; and when Reginald accompanied the abbot to the convent, he found himself the cause both of anger and mirth. A friendly conversation procured free pardon.

Eleonore asked a thousand questions about Laura. Reginald could not reply—he had not observed her. "But I saw a gentleman of our acquaintance, Cecile, who is just arrived, and from whom you will probably receive a most erudite billet. Cadmus must, at least, write Greek."

"Whom do you call Cadmus?" asked Cecile.

"Your excellent father," replied Reginald, "so distinguished for his erudition."

CHAP. XXI.

THE DISCOVERY.

THE return of M. de Cominges caused Cecile to leave the convent ; and Eleonore established herself at her château, there to lament, like Dido, the loss of her Æneas, whom destiny, on the behalf of posterity, had claimed for its own. Be it recollected, however, that Petrarch was not Æneas, nor Eleonore Dido : she was a pretty toy, while Dido was a regal trophy ; but, toy or trophy, how seldom mankind value that which is easily won !

We must admit that Cecile was an easy conquest : she yielded to the first assault of Cupid ; but there was a spirit in her character, a richness in her love, which made her knight, heretofore so passionless, as animated an admirer as he was ardently admired. The sober gentleman-usher remained faithful to his mistress ; and Alice, by her residence in the convent, had become well

versed in the management of affairs of the heart. Under pretence of indisposition, Cecile had ordered refreshments in her own apartment, which Alice and the usher were to serve. The former guessed that there would be enough required for two, and she determined to make that two four, and have a comfortable tête-à-tête with Maitre Nicholas. Reginald arrived by the garden-gate in a friar's dress.

The fair one and her companion were occupied above stairs, little imagining that Madame Malraison, the manager of the house, suspected, from the quantity prepared for a sick lady, that there must be something in the wind: she accordingly crept quietly to Mademoiselle's anti-room, and, looking through a crevice in the door, was shocked by discovering that her young lady was in rude health, and seemingly as happy as she was healthy. Many scenes took place in Avignon, as well as in Paris, and elsewhere, in the fourteenth century, which in these days it would not be prudent to describe. Madame Malraison thought Mademoiselle a very improper young woman, and determined to inform

her father forthwith of the advantages gained by a conventual education. "This comes," said she, "of taking her from under my care! If she had remained, as she ought to have done, in the house, I could have kept her very correct, have furnished her with a good table, and pocketed a very comfortable sum; but, as it is, my master shall know of her goings-on."

Alice perceived the old guardian's movements, and hastened to inform her mistress. Cecile was not a person to be found without an expedient.

"Set off instantly to Nismes," said she to Reginald, "and write to Agenor your excuse for not dining with him."

While the horses were preparing, Reginald wrote a note, dated Nismes, excusing himself for not being present according to his promise; but stating, that he had been prevented by very pressing urgency, and that business called him to Montauban.

Madame Malraison meanwhile went to her master's room; but he was either in a deep study, or a sound sleep.

As Reginald passed the Pont du Garde, he whistled, and Enguerrand soon appeared. He gave him the letter to deliver, with instructions to say, that he had brought it from Nismes.

At M. de Cominges' hour of breakfast, Madame Malraison made her appearance; and after repeating her thoughts of yesterday, she said she had actually seen a young man in Mademoiselle's room; and that he was no other than the handsome knight who had conquered those villains, Les Bâtards.

“ Well, dame, it was an action worthy of Cincinnatus. Cæsar passed the Rubicon, set the laws of his country at defiance, and, they say, behaved very improperly to the women. Perhaps, Madame Malraison, you may have heard of the expression of his soldiers, ‘ Romani, servate uxores; mœchum adducimus:’ but this youth saved our women from ravishers, and our men from pillagers. Think of that, Madame; think of Cincinnatus, Madame Malraison. You know what he did, Madame? If you do not, let me tell you: he was made dictator, conquered the enemies of his

country, and then returned to cultivate his land."

"And the conqueror of Les Bâtards," replied the *gouvernante*, "returns to cultivate an improper intercourse with your daughter."

"Fie on it, Madame Malraison!" returned the easy old man; "Cincinnatus could not be guilty of such a fault, even if my daughter would."

"But it is the Marquis of Montserrent, and not Cincinnatus, of whom I am speaking," insisted the tenacious dame.

"To satisfy you of the scandal you utter," answered M. de Cominges, "I will visit the ambassador."

Count Agenor showed him the letter he received the evening before, which must have been written about the time alluded to by Madame; and Monsieur returned to his house, and sent for Alice. She acknowledged to him that, while her mistress was sleeping off a bad head-ache, she herself had received a handsome young monk, who came in the place of Father Benedict, her confessor. The usher was called in, and he declared

that he saw such a person arrive, and go towards his lady's room; and that he believed Alice to be very capable of liking the young monk for a confessor much better than the reverend Benedict. Monsieur was glad to have the opportunity of believing the dame to be in the wrong. The fact was, that, in his youth, he had been much more fond of feminine than bibliopolic charms; that he was no firm believer in virtue being more highly valued at Avignon than it was at Corinth;—and, as Alice was leaving the room, whispered her; “My daughter must be a great fool to allow that troublesome old woman to break in upon her retirement. I am sure, if I did not take great care, she would never allow me time to finish my translation of Aristotle.”

During Reginald's absence, Cecile passed much of her time in pursuing her studies; and her father was delighted with the progress she had made, with the improvement of her appearance, and with the fire and talent of her observations. She gained daily an increase of power, and was quite sure, if Madame again took the field, that, even without

a lie of Alice's invention, she would be enabled to beat her from post to post. This discovery Madame Malraison had also made; and she voted the father an old sophist, and the daughter a young slut.

“In my time,” murmured she, “young ladies always behaved well before marriage; but now-a-days the girls seem turned into men, and make love as indiscriminately. I am sure Monsieur Malraison could never accuse me of that, whatever he might say as to love for liqueurs: but that is a harmless passion, we all know.”—Every one is kind to his own *little vice*!

CHAP. XXII.

DIPLOMATIC ARRANGEMENTS.

WITH the ardor which characterized De Vavasour, he galloped to his destination ; and, dreaming only of love and glory, the country through which he passed, though new, had no charms for him : no, the heart and the titles he had won occupied his thoughts, and Reginald viewed the beauties of nature as mere localities, unconnected with his present or future prospects. During a short residence at the castle of Montauban, Reginald did not pay very great attention to the various complaints made by the vassals against his seneschal : he merely informed them that he had been taken prisoner by brigands, and obliged to borrow a certain sum of money to pay his ransom ; that money must be levied forthwith, and sent to Avignon, under strong escort, to repay the Pope's treasurer, who had advanced it on interest. His

decisive tone soon procured the money; and having feasted all his peasants, he visited his other estates, and then set out for Paris, where he learnt that Count Agenor had applied to be recalled, on account of the Count de Roussillon's health, and the prospect of his wife's confinement, which her father wished should take place at the family mansion.

The Count Robert d'Artois presented De Vavasour to the king, who warmly approved of his services, and requested him to accept the station of ambassador at the court of Rome.

Reginald declared himself incapable of doing justice to his majesty's kindness towards him; but Robert insinuated, that when kings condescend to offer, they expect acceptance to follow. Reginald was not a person calculated to accord generally with this proposition; but he was of an ambitious nature, and his natural feeling had been strongly increased by the stimulative arguments of Cecile. On the day of his departure, the king gave him a private audience, and communicated his wishes as to certain arrangements he had to

propose to the court of Avignon. These we shall notice hereafter : suffice it to say, that Charles of France found Reginald de Vavasour quite as willing to enter into his schemes, as John of England found Richard Plantagenet eager to circulate the hidden treasures of the monasteries and abbeys. We cannot speak by the book, but we will assure the reader of our conviction as to the fact.

Reginald left Paris, and was again received with great joy by the family of Roussigné.

In order to wean Lorenzo from his foolish attachment to Claudine, with which the prince had become acquainted, and which both he and the Countess considered as unworthy her son's rank and station in life, it was determined that he should accompany Reginald in his embassy to Avignon. Lorenzo felt at first much grieved at this intimation, but then considered it would be possible to transfer Claudine thither : to such a measure he was certain that Reginald would be adverse, for he was a great upholder of propriety.

The Marquis of Montserrent was presented by Agenor as his successor, and graciously received

by his Holiness. The increasing illness of the Count de Roussillon rendered it necessary to travel at a slow pace ; and shortly after reaching the château, its venerable owner expired without a sigh, while all around wept bitterly for the loss they had sustained.

Petrarch accepted the invitation of the new ambassador to take apartments in his house, on an understanding that his assistance was to be accepted when his services could be useful. On the route from Vienne, Reginald had visited the Château d'Albon, and, as formerly, was received with a warmth of regard which appeared to him unaccountable. He was put in possession of the terms of the proposed treaty between the Primate and the Dauphin :

First, The prince primate is to freely and fully resign all claim to St. Colombe.

Second, The prince Dauphin is to retain possession of the Fort d'Albon.

Third, The prince Dauphin is to withdraw his claim to the city of Vienne and territory attached ; but is to be permitted to purchase the droits at-

tached to the Maison de la Ville, if, in a specified time, the prince primate does not become the purchaser.

These were the principal articles : there were others relative to reduction of troops on the part of the primate, and withdrawing certain soldiers from different points near the Viennese territory, on the part of the Dauphin : these terms had been arranged between Don Calderos and Hubert : the Don was positive, and the latter very candidly acknowledged that he foresaw the downfall of the ecclesiastical power in the Viennese : that at this moment they possessed neither sufficiency of men nor money to enforce their rights ; and the only prudent measure was to give way to circumstances.

Reginald, in a private interview, explained to his Holiness that the influence of the church was decreasing in consequence of the wealth and indolence of its dignitaries. “ This,” said he, “ is not the case with regard to the Prince Primate, who, with an exhausted treasury, is forced to keep up a large body of troops : but the time is now arrived, holy

Father, when it becomes necessary for the Primate to receive pecuniary aid, or to conclude a treaty with the Dauphin which will materially injure the power and dignity of that true son of the church. With respect to the clerical body in general, they did not contribute, as their means well enabled them, due aid in the suppression of Les Bâtards, who, if they had been victorious, would have exterminated the servants of our holy religion. King Charles therefore proposes to levy a tax of one tenth upon church property, provided the holy Father gives his consent: at the same time, the King is well aware of the wants of the church at its fountain-head, and is willing to offer a large portion of this tax in succour of an establishment, in which all kings and Christians ought to feel deeply interested."

Pope John replied, "that he considered his most Christian majesty as undoubtedly right in making those who were so much interested in the defence of every thing that was dear to man, pay for that defence; and he felt all the merit of his

most Christian majesty's intentions towards the welfare of the holy See."

This was all that Reginald could gain in direct answer. Although an inexperienced diplomatist, yet, in his own mind, the word *avarice* had occurred, instead of *wants*; and to that key the music sounded in his ear, but did not find its way to his tongue. Very reverently bowing, Reginald took leave, and, thoughtfully occupied, returned home. He then summoned Lorenzo: "My friend," said he, "there is no hope of extracting a single piece of gold out of the papal purse; so to horse, and for Milan! If the Emperor does not furnish the means of defence, he must grant the power of surrender."

CHAP. XXIII.

THE SECRET.

THE principal part of Petrarch's time was passed in composing sonnets in praise of Laura ; these were always transmitted to Cecile, who delivered them to her friend. Laura was quite sensible of the merits of such poetry as sung her praises ; and the more she was lauded for her virtue, the more was she determined to remain virtuous. Cecile was perfectly satisfied that Laura had as little of the wood-nymph as of the marine Venus in her composition : she might, however, be an angel, for what she knew, for she could never persuade her to acknowledge a spark of feeling for an impassioned lover. She was, at the same time, compelled to allow that Laura was very well made, had fine eyes, a pretty mouth, and good teeth ; small hands and feet ; and a large quantity of dark auburn hair : but she concluded with thinking, as

perhaps many other ladies of Avignon would have done on a similar occasion, that her own figure was as correctly shaped as that of this eighth wonder of the world. Cecile admitted also that Laura was more attractive and more graceful than poor dear Eleonore, who, when any thing went wrong, would sit down and cry.

“ It is a pity,” said Cecile, “ that she is not married to some good honest man, who would make her mother of a family, and leave her to teach the children their lessons, see that they were well washed, and nurse them when sick. Poor Eleonore! she is as dull as any deserted damsel can wish to be; but still she is good, and unhappy; so I will pay her a visit, and whine away a morning: no, I will comfort her with the tidings that Petrarch might as well have chosen for a mistress the statue of Santa Clara, or the picture of the Madonna, which the Italian painter has finished for Pierre Roger, and which he dreams of all night, and worships all day.”

Cecile determined to ask her father's permission, as she guessed he would not refuse, and considered

it very advisable to be confidential where confidence would not be detrimental. Alice and the usher were her attendants ; and, as she passed the residence of the ambassador, she sent to inquire if the Marquis had any message for the Château de l'Isle. Petrarch answered, in person, that Reginald had been summoned to the palace on important business. " You have treated me latterly, Mademoiselle," exclaimed he, " in a manner very different from that warmth of friendship with which I formerly was honored."

" My feelings towards you, Signor Petrarch, are changed : you were once the impassioned soul of a happy group ; you are now the agitated, fervid lover of a shadow."

" You believe that I loved Eleonore, gained her love in return, and then deserted her : but it is not so. No, no, I pitied and esteemed, but I did not love her."

" The Mahometans, where they take *pity* on a beautiful slave, esteem her for her virtue ; and deprive her of it, without loving."

" I am no Turk, lady ; but a plain-spoken and

not ungrateful Christian. I acknowledge that, for a moment, I felt something resembling passion for Eleonore, when she confessed a feeling more tender than that of gratitude towards me: but though I considered the sentiment only as its offspring, yet the evil passions grafted in our nature ——”

“ Is this your morality, Petrarch ?” interrupted Cecile ; “ you, who ruined the woman who trusted in your honor, now coldly to talk of *pity* and esteem. Shame ! shame ! would I were a man !”

“ Stay, stay a moment, ere you condemn me so unjustly. Sin had almost gained dominion over me ; but I became cold as marble, and dared not sacrifice immortal happiness for the chance of mortal enjoyment. If I have sinned, even in thought, I am now punished by being made the prey of feelings variable and unaccountable. It made no difference to me whether Eleonore was present or not : now, when I am in the presence of Laura, I feel violent transitions from heat to cold, from hope to despair. When she smiles on me, I think she will cease to be cruel, and press my suit too

strongly ; she then frowns and leaves me : but still I should be satisfied, were she to say that she valued my affections, though she could not, and must not return them ; for I think of her more as an angel than a woman.”

“ This is all very well, friend Petrarch ; but if the fair obdurate indulge friendship, or admit pity into her bosom, love will creep in, and supersede the two cold deities ; and that which may now be pure love, in your breast, will become passion, indomitable passion. Laura possesses great personal charms : these, and the difficulty of conquest, will inspire you with additional ardor : she admires your verses in which she is lauded, though she will not acknowledge the attractions of the writer. If Laura defends her virtue one third part of the time during which the Trojans, in daily skirmishes, withstood the Greeks,—be assured, you will recollect that there is such a person as the Lady de l’Isle, who, although it is true she cannot be compared in beauty to your phenomenon, has still some attractions.”

“ All I know is,” sighed Petrarch, “ that the bewitching Laura is my enchantress.

O Cupid, god of love ! thy shaft I feel ;
But, in thy mercy, let my senses steal
To some sweet bower, where in soft repose
My weary limbs may rest, my wearier eyes may close.
If 'tis not love, what is it that I feel ?
But if 'tis love, what is this love ?

If thou art good, why bitter is thy sting ?
If bad, why dost thou, from thy treach'rous wing,
Scatter fresh torments,—but such torments sweet,
As make me burn to die at her angelic feet !
If 'tis not love, &c.

My pain is transport, and lament is vain ;
For though on oceans lost, I'll not complain :
In summer's heat my blood to ice will turn ;
And midst the winter's blasts it will as fiercely burn.
If 'tis not love, &c.

“ Love works wonders with you, signor,” said Cecile: “ come to the Château de l'Isle, and sing that interesting composition to poor Eleonore. Here comes the ambassador, riding at a most undiplomatic pace. Sir Reginald, I am going to visit my poor friend, who silently sits by the brook with a willow in her hand!”

Petrarch had retired. Reginald requested her to ride on, as he had business to transact with his friend, and said that he would speedily overtake her. On his re-appearance, she carelessly asked what the important business was to which she was to be thus sacrificed.

“It was an affair,” answered De Vavasour, “considered of importance by his Holiness.”

“Let me know it,” cried the inquisitive girl: “my interest in affairs of diplomacy is now as great as it was formerly in those of warfare; I shall most decidedly become a finished intrigante:—so tell me directly what this business is, I insist.”

“You may insist, if you choose,” answered Reginald, smiling; “but I must not tell.”

“Not tell, sir?”

“No, Mademoiselle! I have passed my word that I will not.”

“Well, sir, regard your word in preference to me; but ask no favors, for none will I grant, until you tell.”

He declared it to be impossible.

“ Sir Reginald,” said his mistress in a serious tone, “ with an ardor I cannot excuse, with a passion I cannot defend, with a sacrifice of duty which admits not of apology, I have made you the master of my whole heart : I am your willing slave, but I will be met on equal grounds. While you are faithful to me, I would search you as eagerly as Orpheus did his Eurydice in the dominions of Pluto ; but I will not be considered as a babbler or tell-tale. What you know, I will know. You may trust me.”

Instead of carrying on the discussion further, Reginald very ungallantly and rapidly turned round his horse’s head, and galloped back to the town at full speed. He alighted at the gate of the palace, and begged an immediate audience of his Holiness, which was granted. “ My son,” said the Pope, “ you seem angry and overheated ; I hope our secretary has not taken measures to irritate you on the subject upon which we spoke.”

“ No, holy father, your orders are obeyed : but as the despatch is sent off, and nothing can pre-

vent its being duly communicated, I beg your Holiness to release me from my promise, in favor of one person, for whose secrecy I can pledge my word."

Pope John smiled.—" You are young and incautious, and about to trust a woman. I know of none in this town, save Madame de Sade, steady enough to be confided in; and she, being married, might think it right to tell her husband, and, as she is religious, her confessor."

" The person I mean," rejoined our hero, " is not married, and will not confess."

" Do not let her choose for a confessor the new bishop elect: if she wishes to confess, let her come to me; my age and character will protect both. She is a very clever as well as a very handsome female; and tell her even old age can see a white scarf with a red rose affixed to it. Begone, my son."

Reginald kissed the hand of the good-natured old man, and overtook Cecile as she was entering the castle. " I will now tell my little tyrant," said he.

“The tyrant is not little, and does not want to be told,” was the reply of the offended damsel :—“What think you, Eleonore, of a young knight, while escorting his mistress, refusing to answer a question, and galloping off because it was repeated ?” Then turning to Reginald, she added :—“What do you think I care for your speculations ? which will end in nothing ; and, like the pomps and vanities, as well as wishes, of this wicked world, vanish into the clouds of oblivion. But, my dear Eleonore, I am glad to tell you that Petrarch is as unhappy as possible. I advised him to come and cool his transports in your brook ;—catch the pearly drops that fall from your celestial eyes, and cherish them in a goblet with his own ; mingling groans and sighs with every drop ;—and his, ‘O, Laura, Laura !’ with your ‘O, Petrarch, Petrarch !’”

If Eleonore had lived in later times, she might have known that “the course of true love never did run smooth :” as it was, she determined to make the best appearance possible, to soften the animosities existing between her friends, and to

order the comforts necessary for refreshment after exercise. Reginald was for some time too much chagrined to speak ; but at last he said, “ I will make you, Madame, our judge. A secret was confided to me as ambassador ; Mademoiselle chose to know it : I refused ; she persisted ;—and I, to settle the matter, and prove her ridiculous for desiring to know that which could not interest her, galloped off to the palace. Pope John said that the inquisitive person must be a woman ; but if a treacherous one, she could do no harm, as the bearer of the despatch was on his road. ‘ There is only one,’ continued he, ‘ who has sense enough not to communicate the secret to the whole world, and even she would lack the prudence of keeping it from her husband : there is another, who I hope is cautious enough not to have Pierre Roger for her confessor, and not again to display in the hall of audience a white scarf with a red rose affixed.’ ”

“ Did the Pope name me ? ” inquired Cecile.

“ Certainly not,” replied Reginald ; “ his Holiness

ness only recommended the person in question to confess to him."

"I should have no objection to confess to Pope John that I do not care for Pierre Roger or his opinions," cried the lively damsel, "and that he never shall be my confessor; but that I do care for the white scarf, and the success which it produced. It was, however, very foolish of you, Reginald, to expose me to the Pope."

"By my honor!" exclaimed our hero, "I neither mentioned names nor alluded to sexes. I merely said that the person who wished to be informed was one for whom I could pledge my word, and that no confessor would be master of the secret."

"His Holiness seems to have some idea of Laura's character and mine," rejoined Cecile; "and if he will condescend to hear my confession, I will acknowledge —— that I am a weak fool, Reginald, and that you are no better."

Eleonore recovered her spirits, in witnessing the gaiety of her companions, and made minute in-

quiries as to Laura, her beauty, age, shape, height, and manner.

“ She is,” said Cecile, “ an animated statue, and suits very well the station she has found, namely, Virtue personified. On this statue Franciscus hangs his verses ; and she looks at them from her pedestal, smiling while she looks.”

“ I should like much to see more of those verses,” said Eleonore.

“ And if you did see them,” replied her friend, “ you might understand them, or at least read them ; for you have taken some pains with your Italian ; whilst, I do verily believe, my friend Virtue neither knows Italian, nor could understand the verses if she did.”

As Reginald and Cecile rode towards Avignon, the lover wished to prove his truth by relating the secret ; but Cecile said, “ No, not to-day : if, on reflection, you think that I can aid you, either by opinion, advice, or suggestion, then tell it to me ; but having carried my point, I am satisfied.”

Near the entrance of the town, to which there are seven gates, they separated. At parting, Cecile

said, " Perhaps the fruit is not worth plucking, since it is known that the dragon is laid to rest."

Reginald smiled, and vowed that he who subdued the dragon never loved with half the fervor which he himself felt for the beautiful Cecile.

" The lock of the garden gate is not changed," answered she, " though, perhaps, the disposition to use the key is."

" You wrong me, Cecile ; it was you I thought of, not myself."

" Well, then, think of me as much as you will, but let it be with affection rather than precaution : I am able to conquer the dragon himself."

CHAP. XXIV.

GLORY.

As Cecile rode slowly home, she thought, "What strange beings we mortals are! No two persons can be more in love than Reginald and myself: we command our own time, and I know he does not worship any other mistress; and yet I scarcely ever see him. He must be taking lessons in verse-writing from Petrarch; I will cross-question him when he arrives."

It was dusk as Cecile rode up to the gate; and when, on dismounting, her palfrey was led away, she felt the pressure of a man's hand;—it was Reginald.

"So, my young sir," exclaimed Cecile, "you are determined to prove yourself a true lover, and not let time limp. Close the gate, Alice, and go first to my room; if Malraison is there, you know where that curious cordial is, and how to use it.

I have been thinking, Reginald, why it is that we, who are unrestrained, so seldom meet."

"Seldom, Cecile?"

"Yes, seldom: we have never met more than once a day, and for the last two days not at all. Those days have been very dull ones to me."

"I was obliged to prepare for the cardinal secretary a document of great length, and Petrarch was occupied in searching for precedents. It worried us both heartily, but I had vowed not to leave it until finished."

"That was a very foolish vow; for if you had made your list of queries, and brought them here, I would have handed them to my father, who would have been most grateful for being kept awake by important business; and while he was poring over musty books, we might have together laughed away the melancholy created by a day of care and trouble. Thus all parties could have been easily pleased."

"Very comfortably, but not very diplomatically arranged. Your father would then have been as wise as the cardinal secretary, and that, of itself,

would have destroyed my plan: for the Count de Cominges does not hide his knowledge."

"The worthy man requires no trumpeter," answered Cecile: "but you must know a secret. He has taken it into his head, that the greatest person in the world, next to the Pope, is the king of France's ambassador; and, next to him, his locum-tenens: if you would humour that fancy, the Count would let me take a trip with Eleonore. I have a great fancy to see the Chartreuse at Grenoble; and as your page, I could get in."

"But if the good people of Avignon find out that Mademoiselle Cecile sets off with a young knight tête-à-tête, what will Madame de Sade say?"

"Why, we will prevent her saying any thing, by taking Petrarch with us, and making him write an epic poem, of which Laura shall be the virtuous heroine: and if, after all, she does say any thing, I will threaten her with writing notes on it, to convince her lover that he is a fool, and she a prude."

"Without such threats, I think it might be

arranged : if Petrarch would go, Eleonore would also ; and as the world knows the object of his attachment, he will give the whole party a steady colour. I will write to Robert d'Artois ; and feel confident that my last messenger will put him in such good-humour, that I shall be listened to, and your father made a man of importance for three months, without injuring or improving the affairs of state."

This point of arrangement being concluded to the fair one's satisfaction, the delights of a party where no interruption to their happiness could take place, were canvassed, and Cecile rallied her lover upon his coldness.

" Whatever honied words may pass your lips," said she, " I am sure, Reginald, you are not deeply in love. I believe you love me better than any other of my sex : perhaps I am the only woman whom you care for : but I require a whole heart or none, and I will not share your love with any other mistress. Now I believe glory to be your mistress, and rank and dignity your aim : am I not right ?"

" Would you have me condemn myself in the

face of your censure? You say you will not share my heart with any other mistress, and yet say my heart is set upon glory. Now, in my opinion, it is the mind that looks to glory, and the heart to love. When I am with you, my heart is my master, and obeys the little god; when I am alone, my mind rules, and is subjected to such pursuits as you seem jealous of. It is cruel of you, Cecile, to urge me forward in the career, and yet threaten to discard me if I obey your commands, and act on the impulses you yourself have created."

"It is indeed unjust; your candour convinces me that you love me, and me alone; and as for the devotion of the mind to a superior object, I must consider myself as coming in the third rank of glory;—first, the glory of dignity; second, the glory of war; and, third, the glory of beauty."

"I will not admit your position: beauty is and always has been the prominent object of adoration. It has been equally destructive to men in all ages; and in our classics we read of the mischiefs produced by it among the gods and goddesses. Ju-

piter, with all his power, was the slave of Cupid, in whose presence even philosophers tremble: we must therefore place your minor in a major point of view, and consider your first two points as dependent on your third."

" Well, Reginald, leave your logic, and vow,—no, you shall not vow! but hear *me* swear, by all the hopes you have of rank and dignity, and by all the hopes I have of uninterrupted felicity in our proposed flight to the mountains, that I will love you until—I find one that I can love better! but I pray thee, begone, and let Glory reward you for preferring her to Cecile de Cominges."

CHAP. XXV.

THE ALLY.

REGINALD found at his hotel a summons to attend the Pope.

“ Well, chevalier of the white scarf,” said his Holiness, “ have you made your peace, by sacrificing my confidence ? ”

“ When I stated your assent, holy father, the demand was not persisted in.”

“ I have been considering the different bearings of the question which we lately discussed,” returned John, “ and am fully determined to act up to what I have held out to the legate of Lombardy. There are two persons whom I wish to bind strongly to my interest, as they possess rare talents, are learned doctors, and intrepid men :—the one is Pierre Roger, now bishop of Arras ; and the other Giacomo Colonna. You can, by certain means, which I leave you to guess, secure the for-

mer ; and you may tell the person whom I imagine you will employ, that an archiepiscopal mitre shall be the reward of his zeal. We will look hereafter to a bishopric for Giacomo."

" I think, holy father, that I can succeed with Colonna, through the medium of Petrarch."

" No time should be lost ; therefore take this message to the person I allude to, and say that to her I entrust the secret. Desire the master of the same mansion to attend me : I can turn his scholarship to account ; and I know his attachment to the papal establishment in Avignon, on account of the money it circulates, not for the religion it inculcates. A classic manuscript will go further with him than a missal."

Reginald proceeded directly to the *Maison de Cominges*. The Count readily obeyed the summons, and the usher of *Mademoiselle* was ordered to conduct Reginald to her apartment, with strict orders to prevent interruption. Cecile was much surprised at the arrival of her lover, and still more surprised when she heard the cause of his coming.

" I feel much honored by the confidence of his

Holiness, and will not betray it. Let me consider what further measures had better be adopted. While you are here, I shall think more of your handsome person than your public character: leave me then: go directly to the bishop, and appoint a meeting for to-morrow evening at the convent of Santa Clara: the day after, my father dines with a large assemblage at the house of Monsieur de Sade: I shall invite the bishop and Petrarch for that day, when every thing shall be well arranged. For the present, vale et valete, and recollect in me you have a faithful ally."

Reginald delivered the message to the bishop, which kept the accomplished doctor from dreaming of the Madonna that night. Petrarch assured his friend of the cordial co-operation of Giacomo Colonna.—"From a private letter received this evening from Bologna," said he, "I understand that the Emperor has dared to excommunicate our excellent Pope, to declare him a heretic, and that his intention is forthwith to proceed to Rome."

"I hope," said Reginald, "to get the start of him. I shall resign the command of the Viennese

troops, and have already ordered my seneschal to bring forward to Villeneuve my knights and men at arms."

"It would be politic, Reginald," replied Francis, "to apply to Robert d'Artois. A sum of money from King Charles would be very serviceable. Write directly, and send the letter by ——: what think you of our friend Le Bavard?"

"He is tolerably cautious, passably brave, and an intolerable liar: the one will secure him from running into danger, the other assist him if involved in it, and the latter may serve or injure him as chance directs."

On the following evening, with a cool head and determined spirit, Cecile entered the parlour of Santa Clara, and found the bishop already arrived. After paying her proper salutations to the lady abbess, and laying down the offering, which was double her usual gift, she said, "I am happy to meet you here, Seigneur! for I have long wished to answer some queries you put to me when we last met, and which I have written down, with my answers on the other side. I know it is difficult to

cope with so great and learned a doctor of theology; but on these abstract points, it is not extraordinary for one so conversant in Latin and Greek as I am, to have doubts."

"Certainly," answered the prelate, "your father is an erudite man, but ——"

The abbess had been upon what is called tenter-hooks while this conversation was going on; and at last, begged pardon for absenting herself, on excuse of imperative business in the convent. The following conversation then ensued between the lady and the priest :

"Now, Monsieur l'Evêque," said Mademoiselle, "without entering into abstract questions, I will ask two things; the first is, what is your ruling passion? and the second is, what would you do to gratify it?"

"If I answered you with gallantry ——"

"We have nothing to do with gallantry at present; you may talk on that subject to our lady of Santa Clara, over a bottle of Lunel. I am come here to be your friend. I believe you incapable of speaking a falsehood, except where gallantry

is in the case, and then you cannot help it; so I again repeat my queries."

"You are much too clever for me, Mademoiselle Cecile!"

"I want the aid of your talents, and the assurance of your fidelity."

"You may command my poor services."

"I never command services I have not a right to claim."

"Would that you had that right over mine!"

"This is foolish: you know my sentiments; and you ought to be wise enough to know further, that whatever allowances may be made by a sinful world for persons doomed to celibacy, yet the blindness is removed, if suspicion is directed towards persons situated as I am."

"I submit to your wisdom."

"Well then, are you contented to accord to my wishes?"

"I give you *carte blanche*: do what you will with me, so that you protect my honor and character."

"I know well the feelings of your heart, Bishop

of Arras! I know you expect one day to succeed to the triple crown: I can open the way to it."

"By honorable means?"

"Do you dare suspect me of using those which are dishonorable?"

"Again I confess myself in the wrong."

"To be brief, the papal power is in danger: insult will be offered in the most daring manner to our excellent pontiff, who has so lately rewarded your talents."

"And those talents, nay, my life, are at his disposal."

"Then listen: you are to form one of a secret council, and your reward for fidelity is to be an archiepiscopal mitre."

"I only ask to be rewarded if my services merit it."

"Dine with me to-morrow.—Adieu!"

The bishop kissed her hand, and the fair ally of the papal throne departed from the abbey.

On arriving at her hotel, Cecile found Reginald in eager anxiety for her return. "I have gained the bishop to our cause," said she, while the

knight looked somewhat disconcerted ; “ and received from him a vow of eternal fidelity to—the Pope. Be not suspicious, Reginald ! do not let so base a thought remain one moment in your mind : certainly his reverence wished to talk of love and flattery ; but I silenced that attack as rapidly as words could do, and left him to dream of higher honors in the church, instead of in Olympus ; of ambition, instead of love. It is very well for a young and handsome knight to combine these two pursuits ; but for a bishop, it is weak, it is wicked, nay more, it is ridiculous.”

Reginald was well satisfied with the first diplomatic effort of the new ally of His Holiness : he applauded the manner with which she had treated the passion of her episcopal lover, and declared that her talents and prudence rendered her worthy of being the successor of John himself. “ To be sure, my love,” added he, “ your figure is rather too slight to fill with dignity the papal robes, but good living and idleness may remove that obstacle ; your knowledge of the Fathers and of doctrinal points is limited ; but Petrarch, with his extracts,

could lift you out of that difficulty. You like power and wealth, and you possess firmness : your beauty would be a sad temptation to the cardinals ; but time will rob you of that, so we need not now discuss that point."

" You certainly," replied Cecile, " are a rare specimen of the race of lovers, sir ambassador, knight, and moralist ! do you not think it possible to occupy ourselves more agreeably than with foolish fantasies about popedom ?"

Reginald ceased to banter his fair companion, and gradually their thoughts were directed to a more pleasing course. Our business, however, is to proceed with the story ; and so we will on to the proposed council, and the consequences thereof.

CHAP. XXVI.

THE APPEAL.

As the Count de Cominges quitted his house for that of Monsieur de Sade, he met Reginald, accompanied by the bishop and Petrarch: Cecile had informed him that they were to be her visitors; and in passing, he wished them an agreeable party, and a powerful Latin argument. When the viands were removed, the bishop gave the details of his plan, which Petrarch committed to writing: Reginald subsequently proposed some alterations, which he thought would be more agreeable to the Colonna party. When these propositions had been discussed and agreed to, the bishop suggested to Petrarch that it would be advantageous to visit Giacomo Colonna, and follow up the opening which had already been made. During their absence, Reginald reclined himself on a couch, and detailed the substance of his imaginings; while

Cecile, fondly gazing upon her lover, appeared to be enchanted with his brilliant prospects. The door of the chamber suddenly opened, and in marched no less a person than Monsieur de Cominges.

Reginald started up, but Cecile retained her seat: she saw that her father, who was a man of very sober as well as studious habits, had indulged too freely in the civic merriment: his eyes were flashing with anger: his cheeks were flushed.

“I expected,” exclaimed he, “to find four scholars discussing a Roman argument: but, instead of a French philosopher, I find a foolish girl, hanging like Sappho over her Phœbus. I acknowledge that the triclinium was a happy invention for a warm climate, but I do not think it happily placed in a tête-à-tête with two young unmarried persons. I do not blame you, Count and Marquis; no, dignified sir, I saw my daughter was the impassioned Roman, mother Messalina; but I beg of you not to encourage such conduct: she is the property of another man.”

“Let that other man come and claim his pro-

perty," cried the indignant damsel: "my hand was demanded and given; I assented;—but till it is claimed, I will at least act for myself, and take the risk of such actions."

"Well, then," rejoined her father, "I must forbid the Marquis of Montserrent from entering my doors."

"If he obeys you," answered the daughter, "I will visit him: he will not shut his doors."

"Then I will confine you to your apartment," exclaimed her sire.

"You have disposed of your right in favor of another," retorted Cecile: "so now I am determined to be the sole judge of my conduct, as I consider myself the best judge of the principles which guide it."

"Principles! what do you know of principles, or of the shades upon shades which exist therein? If you doubt me, look to Aristotle's *Essay on Rhetoric*, and then read Demosthenes's *Philippics*, and the *Orations of Æschines and Cicero*: consider the ruling principles that guide the minds of men, and see how various they are, even in the

greatest characters. Look to the ambition of Alexander and Cæsar: vanity was the stimulus to the first; and nobleness of mind, with love of rule, to the last. The ruling principle of Ovid was love; of Juvenal, satire; of Horace, conviviality: in one Brutus, you see the principle of stern justice; and in the other, that of severe liberty: the principle of Seneca mixed up maxims with avarice; Cato's combined philosophy with religion; Plato's, love with morality; Nero's, grandeur with cruelty;—while Messalina ——”

“ You dare not, Count de Cominges,” cried Cecile, “ compare me to Messalina?”

“ No,” replied he; “ but you were born under the planet Venus.”

“ The celestial Venus was of a genetrical, and not meretricial character,” answered the learned beauty: “ you cannot say I am the first, and you dare not say I am the last. I will appeal to the *Cour d'Amour*.”

At this dreaded name, Monsieur became somewhat composed.

“What, after all,” said Reginald, “may the matter be, Count de Cominges?”

“Matter, indeed!” rejoined he: “a pretty time to talk of matter! matter is in the philosophical world ——”

“Immaterial to us,” said Cecile to her father: “you have broken into my private chamber, while engaged on affairs of state.”

“Affairs indeed! a pretty state of affairs! talk of affairs of state, and look to such men as Camillus; seek for an historian to record them, and you will find such men as Livius and Tacitus in the Roman, and in the Grecian, you find Plutarch, Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides: but I forgot Caesar’s Commentaries.”

“We do not want you, sir, to be our commentator,” exclaimed Cecile.

“Never mind the Count, Mademoiselle,” said her lover; “he is what they collegiately call ‘Bacchi plenus.’”

“I do not know, sir, what you call collegiately ‘Bacchi plenus,’” shouted De Cominges; “or whe-

ther you mean to insinuate that the members of the collegiate body, assembled this day at the hospitable board of De Sade, were worshippers at the altars of Bacchus. You must be informed, sir, that Bacchus was worshipped as a conqueror in India; that his exploits render him worthy of the pen of the greatest historians; and if you mean ——”

“ I am sure, father,” said Cecile, “ I do not know what *you* mean, but I know what you have done. Without being announced, you broke into the privacy of a married woman’s apartment; and I repeat, that I will appeal to the Cour d’Amour.”

At the repetition of this awful name, the Count again became silent.—“ M. de Cominges,” pursued his daughter, “ I defy your authority.”

This threat softened, or perhaps terrified, the lately elevated scholar, and he began to think:—“ the case will become celebrated all over France: it will reach the ears of the Vicomte de Leontin who will break off the match; and this young man will not be such a fool as to marry her.”

These thoughts occupied the unfortunate Count until the return of the deputies.

The bishop cordially greeted the scholar, and a goblet of wine was proposed to the health of the fair ally of the papal throne. Reginald pledged it in a bumper, and then threw the goblet over his head, as if to say, "After that I will drink no other health, and the remembrance of that only shall remain." Petrarch announced the satisfactory arrangement of the business in discussion, and with the other guests bade the learned Count good night. Reginald went to the palace, in order to communicate to His Holiness the advancement of his wishes.

On the departure of the visitors, the dispute was renewed between father and daughter; but the appeal was persevered in; and the only ground that the former could gain, was concealment of names, and an avowal that the case occurred in the city of Lyons.

CHAP. XXVII.

OCCUPATIONS.

WHILE the preparations for holding the Court of Love were in progress, we may here relate the various causes that collected so numerous an assemblage in the town and neighbourhood of Avignon. We will first allude to the powers of dignified personages of the court, which were admitted to be decisive in cases of female appeal. This institution arose out of the chivalric spirit of ancient days, and had flourished under the patronage of the Comtesse de Champagne, the daughter of Louis Le Jeune: the unbridled gaiety and pleasure in which the inhabitants of Avignon indulged, had placed such a court as that of Love in the highest estimation. The first arrival was that of the Count de Lunheim, accompanied by Lorenzo and a large train of officers and attendants. He

was the confidential envoy of the Emperor, and was empowered to make certain peremptory demands on His Holiness Pope John, as well as to represent his master in other matters. We here see our old acquaintance, the green man, transformed into a person of consequence; to whose care is entrusted affairs of ecclesiastical as well as secular importance relative to St. Colombe. We have seen that Lorenzo was sent by De Vavasour to Milan, where Louis admitted him to an audience, but resolutely persisted in refusing to give his assent to any partition of the Viennese, which his great predecessor, the Emperor Frederick, had confided to the care of the archbishop. In vain did the canon Hubert, who was the companion of Lorenzo, argue that it was a case of necessity; that the primate could not regain St. Colombe by force; and that, if the troops of the Dauphin stationed at Grenoble advanced upon Montcans, while those quartered in St. Colombe harassed the city of Vienna with constant assaults, the army of the primate would be looped up in the

town;—while the territory of Roussillon would be ravaged by that of the Dauphin advancing from his château.

“The citizens,” said Lorenzo, “are willing to sell to the Dauphin on his own terms, as they have taken umbrage at the military exactments, and consider the power of the church as exorbitant.”

“The Count de Lunheim shall be the bearer of my determination,” replied the Emperor: “you may leave us.”

Hubert made no unnecessary delay; and on his return to Vienne, the primate appointed a meeting with the Dauphin at Avignon, and these two princes arrived with suitable pomp. The Princess Isabelle followed her husband; and the families of Roussillon and Roussigné, with others of distinction, hastened towards the centre of attraction. The castle of Villeneuve had been prepared for the reception of the king, and was now occupied by Count Robert d’Artois and the Dauphin.

Eleonore de l’Isle was a visitor at the Hôtel de Cominges. Reginald was forced to give the whole

powers of his mind to the variety of business with which he was occupied :—with the Pope he had to discuss the affairs of Italy, the strength of the contending parties of Guelfs and Ghibellines, the talents of his legate, and the military conduct of his allies ; with the Dauphin he had to argue for moderation, and with the Primate for concession : and last, though not least in the account, he had to listen to the angry complaints of his fair lady love, and her regrets that she could not for one day at least be transformed into a man. In addition to these occupations, Reginald was employed by Charles in diplomatic affairs ; and if he could spare an interval, he fled to Petrarch, to rally him into energy in the approaching cause : this was rather a difficult task ; because his friend was in too poetical a strain of love to like reason or argument, nor did he approve of the arbitrary powers entrusted to the court.

There was one resting-place in this bustling scene, and that was with the green man : he attended several appointments, but no answers could be extracted from him , so Reginald, in general, threw

himself back in his chair, and gave way to his own reflections, while his companion followed his usual practice of drinking and nodding his head, secure from interruption from others, by the idea that these ambassadors were debating matters of high moment.

While Reginald was thus occupied, Lorenzo pursued with unsuccessful ardor the fair Eleonore: she thought, "she must be cruel only to be kind;" and the very course she followed was the exact one to fix the affections of the fickle Lorenzo. The foolish fancy he had once felt had long subsided; and Eleonore, contrasted with Claudine, shone with redoubled light: thus, even his follies became the instruments of conversion; and while Lorenzo despised the affection of an easily-won object, he was willing to sacrifice his life to obtain the heart of one who rejected his passion.

Eleonore seldom saw her friend Cecile; she was always busy with her lawyers, and appeared as if life and death were on the issue of the appeal. On the contrary, the *sieur*, her father, was heartily

sorry for his conduct on the eventful evening of the ministerial dinner: he had sought, without success, the intermediation of the primate; his letters to Reginald remained unanswered; Petrarch turned a deaf ear to his complaints; and the only one who appeared to listen to him was the green man. With the complacent German, the Count de Cominges could harangue from his entrance to his exit; and he took for granted that the nods were of assent to the learned reasons he gave why fathers and daughters should not make fools of themselves.

When the time approached for hearing the appeal, the Count, dreading a discovery of what he called his irreparable folly in affronting an ambassador, displeasing the Pope, and enraging his daughter, rushed to the residence of De Lunheim, and, almost with tears in his eyes, implored him to make one effort to appease the anger of Mademoiselle de Cominges.

“If you are so unlucky,” replied the imperturbable De Lunheim, “as to have a daughter, you

ought by this time to know how to manage her : as for me, I do not ; and as the affair is none of mine, I will not interfere."

The Count then hastened to the residence of Madame de Roussigné, and revealed to her the secret : Angelina pitied the father, and wished to save the daughter from exposure ; she therefore consented to accompany him to his house.

The Count eagerly inquired for Mademoiselle, and was struck dumb by hearing that she had set off for Lyons.

Angelina, finding her presence no longer necessary, returned home to aid her daughter in their preparations for the morrow.

CHAP. XXVIII.

THE COURT OF LOVE.

THE day so long expected,—the day which had created such an interest in the south of France, and had brought such a vast influx of strangers into Avignon, Villeneuve, and the adjoining towns, at length arrived, and the procession to the court commenced at an early hour of a beautiful autumnal day. The road from the Château of Villeneuve to the palace was lined with troops, and the ladies in their litters were escorted by knights on horseback. Before that of the Princess Isabelle, were twelve running footmen of Navarre, and on either side were six officers of the Dauphin's household; and twenty-four pages followed. The followers of Montleans were splendidly equipped, in order to do honor to the wealth and power of the Count; and those of the Primate and of Robert

d'Artois contributed in like manner to the grandeur of the display.

With regard to the approaching trial, all that was known was that the names were feigned. The Pope had taken his seat in a private and curtained gallery: the cardinals had their gallery richly decorated with their arms; and a canopy on the right of the hall was prepared with great magnificence, under which were placed three chairs of state: opposite were two smaller canopies, one with the arms of France, and the other those of Bavaria: Count Robert d'Artois, the Dauphin, and the Prince Primate, were ushered towards the first; while the Marquis de Montserrent and the Count de Lunheim, as representatives of sovereigns, occupied the latter.

The Princess Isabelle took her seat as president; among the members of the court were:—

Angelina, Comtesse de Roussigné; Beatrice, Comtesse de Sessurel; Aurélie, Comtesse de Montleans; Rosalie, Comtesse de Montleans; Alice, Vicomtesse de Montelimart; Eleonore, (now

called by the Pope Comtesse) de l'Isle ; and Madame de Sade.

The Bishop of Arras was appointed chancellor ; the Count de Montleans, grand veneur ; the Counts Agenor and Lorenzo, chevaliers d'honneur ; and Giacomo Colonna, secretary, in the room of Petrarch, who was to open the cause, which a young collegiate of Lyons, well acquainted with the parties, was instructed to second.

On the part of the defendant, only one advocate appeared ; he was of a respectable family, and destined for the church. After the customary ceremonies of etiquette had been gone through, Petrarch presented himself, and addressed the president :—

“ Educated as I have been in a country where the existence of such a court as the present is unknown ; stranger as I am to the customs, and hostile, as I feel a lawyer must be, to the principles on which this court is founded,—it appears impossible for me to do justice to the fair client who has inconsiderately trusted her cause to my poor talents

and inexperience. If this procedure were caused by tyranny on the part of the husband,—if it related to jealousy on either side,—we might have some guide to direct us, some precedent to appeal to; but the case is, I think, unparalleled in the annals of the Courts of Love. It is an appeal of a daughter against the power of constraint threatened to be enforced by a father in consequence of a supposed attachment of the heart. The appellant is a destined wife, and appears here to claim the rights of a wife in regard to being released from the authority with which she is threatened. My client is willing to plead a passion for the youth who is to be banished from her presence, and the defendant is ready to admit that the passion is founded upon the principles laid down by ancient philosophers as the standard of perfection. In this view of the case, there does appear a right to bring the subject before this tribunal, and the case will be made much stronger if my young associate can prove certain points which he alleges to be facts. Having slightly stated the cause of complaint, it will remain for the court to

consider what assistance its powers will enable it to afford. Before I proceed in my statement, let me appeal to the hearts of those whom I address, in order to ensure a patient hearing.

“ It has been frequently asserted, and may be positively true, that the reputation of the fair sex has been protected by courts, which have been held in honor for nearly two centuries. These courts have encouraged the passion of love and of poetry; and chevaliers, templars, and troubadours have been applauded or condemned. From these courts it was considered there could be no appeal: how great therefore its power! I wish not to see that power unjustly exerted to the injury of a fond father, a careful guardian of his child’s virtue, partaker in her pleasures, and a provider of such society as best is suited to her years, her understanding, and her indiscretion. My client, I am informed, is very young, endowed with talents and superior charms; but her character is too decided for her years, and her discretion little suited to her inexperience. Unwittingly she lost the mastery of her heart: but, ladies of this honorable court, may

not I plead for tenderness on such a point? Let your pulses circulate on your fair bosoms, and let your own hearts respond whether such a loss is always a crime.

“ Let me ask whether the history of France does not afford examples which might mitigate the faults of the case now before you? Might I not, as a lawyer, advance further, and say, are there not on your records cases which would prove the present light as air, even if there existed a charge, on the part of the defendant, which could insinuate positive defeasance from virtue?

“ I have stated the youth of the appellant: I have now to state that, at an early age, she was contracted to a personage of family and fortune. The young Lyonnese, without considering the nature of the engagement, thought only of being her own mistress, and consented to the betrothment. It was stipulated that the bridegroom should claim his bride when she reached the age of fifteen; after which period, if not claimed, she was to be considered as his bride, but her own mistress, and her father no longer responsible for her conduct. Cir-

cumstances, taste, or feeling have prevented the bridegroom elect from enforcing his claim, and the young lady has assumed her rights. Before I proceed further, I may state that the father means to rest his case upon his anxious wishes for the morals of his child, which induce him to restrain her from visiting, or being visited by, those whose attentions he thinks are likely to endanger her character and honor.

“ My client places her reliance on the force of the agreement entered into upon accepting the proposal of marriage : she has not broken through her contract ; she has not offended the vanity, or injured the honor, of a man unknown to her, save by her father’s report ; and she claims at the discretion of this court those rights to which she is entitled by the contract, which gives to her the privileges of womanhood, as sanctioned and laid down by the laws of the Cour d’Amour.”

The president consulted with the counsel, and it was determined not to allow the introduction of evidence. While the secretary closed his notes for the appellant, the advocate for the defendant

was summoned. He addressed the court as follows :—

“ Before appealing to this court for protection, on account of my own natural deficiencies;—before acknowledging the inferior ability which prevents me from coping with the most powerful adversary that exists in the district of Avignon, nay, even in all France and Italy,—I ought to say, let the court consider the nature of its own formation, and the extent of its powers; and let it not allow the superior talents of my opponent to uphold in triumph a cause which cannot be sustained in this or any other court. The accomplished scholar, the philosopher, the lawyer, who addressed you,—one who not only knows the very main-springs of our constitution, but is equally conversant with the habits, manners, and customs of the ancients,—commences his eloquent appeal—with what? Why, a disagreement with the principles, and incertitude as to the powers, on which this court is founded, and with which it is entrusted. I differ from him in toto, in his premises, as well as in the conduct of his argument. I think the principles were adapted to the times in

which such courts were introduced. If those principles had been practically demonstrated with candour and impartiality, I am ready to admit that the state of society must have been benefited ; as the majority of those who ought to protect the fair sex thought only of their own appetites, their sensual feelings, and their uncontrolled tyranny. Upon the case made out by my learned rival, I can see no right whatever of interference. If a wife were injured by her husband, or a damsel deserted by her knight, the court was open to her : if a wife complained, that her husband expected love as well as duty, the court was open to her : but neither of these cases can be precedents. If the character of a female were injured, the court was open to her ; but I appeal to this court with some confidence, when I say, that there has been no proof of female character being attacked or menaced, nor has there been any positive charge as to infringement of rights in any one particular instance. General charges are futile ; they cannot be met : but I defy my antagonist to bring forward any specific charge which can en-

title him to obtain a verdict in this distinguished court. The pleader tells you that a contract of marriage was entered into ; that there was an understanding, if the contract was not fulfilled at a certain period, the party conceiving itself to be injured might be considered as free to act according to its own discretion. To what extent does such an agreement go ? Why to this :—if the husband does not claim his bride, she may consider the contract as dissolved, and receive the addresses of another. But will this court decree that such an admission dissolves the natural alliance, or annihilates the legal as well as natural power, which a father claims over his child, until she is removed from parental authority to offer up her vows at the altar ? by which vows she is for ever bound to duties, both religious and moral ; and from which, by our law, there is no separation or relief. For the fulfilment of these duties the wife is responsible, not only as regards her well-being in this world, but in respect to her perpetual happiness or misery in the next.

“ Before I commit my client’s cause into the

hands of this honorable court, I must state that the defendant is the only parent, the mother being dead: that a respectable person, whose management of the house and family has been celebrated for its decorum, propriety, and economy, discovered a young and handsome gentleman in the private chamber of the defendant's daughter; that an inquiry commenced; and it was apparently impossible that the person in question could have been present. Some time passed away before the father, unexpectedly entering his daughter's apartment, found the young man, before accused, reclining at his ease on a couch, while his daughter was hanging over him, listening, in all probability, to the voice of voluptuous seduction. I feel that, in assuming the fact, I exceed my commission. The father did not hear one syllable which passed, but I have from imagination filled up the picture of that which was most likely to occur under such circumstances.

“ It is not necessary for me to dwell upon the irascibility of the father or the audacity of the daughter: suffice it to say, she has appealed to

this court. The defendant insisted that the offender should not be again admitted within his doors. Could a father have acted otherwise? could a father, protecting the virtue of his daughter, admit of an intimacy between two young and handsome persons, without compromising the character of his own family, and the honor of that to which he had consented to be allied? On these grounds, I confidently appeal to your highness, and to this court, to pronounce such a sentence as shall enable the defendant to uphold those rights which nature, religion, law, and custom have imposed."

The reply evidently produced a great sensation. There had been some disappointment in the court: there was a feeling that so distinguished a lawyer as Petrarch had not sufficiently exerted his talents; there was an inclination to decide in favor of the defendant; but there was also a sensation of pity for the appellant.

Petrarch declined answering, and the young Lyonnese lawyer advanced. He had been occupied in making notes during the progress of the speech

which had made so great an impression, and now commenced :—

“ If my learned opponent, who last addressed your highness, considered it necessary to request indulgence, how much more fervently and yet humbly it behoves me to beseech a patient hearing, and to request the court to bear in mind that my studies are not finished, and that this is the first time of my appearance in a court of justice !

“ The delicacy which marked the opening of the case has been broken through by the counsel for the defendant ; and, if the court establishes a sentence in his favor, I am given to understand that such sentence would not produce any good effect either in Avignon or Lyons, and would assuredly estrange the daughter for ever both from the father and the contracted husband.

“ I do not appear here either for or against the principle of affiance : I may think it one most destructive to human happiness, while others may affirm that it conduces to virtuous habits. My object is to support the appellant. I ask not,

illustrious princess, for a decision in my favor, unless I can prove an undeniable case; nor shall I hesitate, if I prove my case, to demand such decision,—which I know must be recorded, lest cases should arise, grounded upon that decision, which might produce an effect at present little dreamt of. I stand here to relate the facts, and am ready to bring forward witnesses in proof. First, let us turn to the marriage contract, which certainly accords in some points with the view taken of it by my clerical opponent: but he has omitted two circumstances of some consequence; the first is, a collateral avowal of a large fine, in case of non-fulfilment; and the second, an agreement in writing that the appellant, from the date of the contract, was to consider herself her own mistress in every point of view, but that of disposing of her hand. Now be it known to the court, that it was on the concession of these two points, that the bride elect consented to a proposition, which, in the first place, she had decidedly rejected. I must request permission of the court to follow this point closely: for there was an

understanding, that if the father were obliged to absent himself within the year of probation, the daughter was to be placed, during such interval, as a boarder in a convent. The father had in vain endeavoured to enforce other rights of submission; but this of seclusion during his absence being understood, though not written down, was assented to.

“ This at least shows a wish on the part of the appellant to adhere literally to the bargain made ; for certainly it was a mere bargain, and the pounds of woman’s flesh were sold for pounds of gold. Before we arrive at the point which has produced the present appeal, I must be allowed to explain to the court that there was, in the establishment of the father, a certain antiquated maiden, who had two great desires ;—the one was to be bribed, and the other confided in. The arrangements for the convent were very inconvenient to her plans : this elderly lady had certain views for her own domestic comfort, which were by no means forwarded thereby ;---consequently, instead of a sincere friend, she became an enemy and a spy. If

there exist one character more obnoxious to society than another, it is that of a spy ; and we shall soon see how deservedly the representations of a spy were rewarded. This female invented a story which was proved to be unfounded, and she was severely rebuked. The person who had been involved in the supposed dilemma soon afterwards arrived at Lyons in an official situation, and was received as such in the house of the defendant.

“ On a particular occasion, during the absence of the defendant, a dinner party took place at his house, with his knowledge and consent, in his daughter's private room. The party was increased to four, by the addition of a lawyer and a divine. After dinner, the two last-mentioned went to visit a high ecclesiastical authority, upon matters of importance ; and in the interval of their absence, the father arrived from a joyous party of citizens, as replete with the richness of the vintage as with the exuberance of mercantile converse. While the persons were absent in prosecution of the business for which they had assembled, the young official, with that thoughtlessness of character

which so distinguishes his nature, threw himself upon a couch, and talked over the affair which the party were so deeply engaged in. The defendant was evidently heated with wine : high words ensued, and this appeal was made. During the conversation, the two gentlemen returned ; and the defendant, perceiving the unfortunate position of his case, was very anxious to compromise the matter : but the appellant, relying on her right, was determined to seek redress from a court which knows no sentiments but those of freedom and honor. There is one point upon which I have not touched, and that is the principal one which gives this court a right of jurisdiction. The court has a right to know whether or not there exists any sentiment of love which has called forth this appeal : I am authorized to acknowledge, that there does exist the strongest feeling, and that such feeling alone has created the appeal. I am not authorized to defend a virtue which is not attacked ; but I am authorized to say, that the appellant is willing to acknowledge her affection, and to prove, at the point of lance, that her affection is well placed.

The appellant, it is true, considers herself in the same position as the natives of Circassia are placed in on their arrival at Bagdad ; but she also considers, that she may, like them, command her affections, though, like them, she must sacrifice her person. She has read the decision of the Comtesse de Champagne, the daughter of Louis Le Jeune, who declared, in a similar court, so many years ago,—‘ *En amour tout est grâce ; en mariage tout est nécessité : par conséquent, l’amour ne peut pas exister entre les gens mariés.*’

“ This problem can easily be solved ; and the first part, touching the ‘ *grâce en amour,*’ readily established : on the second part, touching the ‘ *nécessité en mariage,*’ I must acknowledge I feel a difference of opinion. I am myself too young to enter into the state of which I speak : but when I see before me so many radiant beauties, whom I know to be as affectionate as chaste,—I cannot admit that such a word as *nécessité* should be introduced in such a decision ; much less can I admit the consequence which the Comtesse has drawn from the argument : I see, and know, that

it is erroneous, as there are many here present to demonstrate.

“ I have stated to you, illustrious princess, the facts ; I have not endeavoured to varnish over any failings, nor have I assumed any virtues : I have not ventured to be oratorical, for I feel my deficiency : I have only ventured simply to speak, in hopes of my being as simply believed.

“ It is not a part of my instructions to argue against the original contract, (although that is open to censure,) in which the defendant would be involved :—it is not necessary here to speak of the necessity of female agency in affairs of public import ;—that will, I think, from historic testimony, be acknowledged : but I am authorized to say, that the intimacy between the appellant and the party who has occasioned the appeal, is necessary to her happiness ; and that the appellant would rather pass one hour in his company, than years in that of another. This opinion, so declared, affects the affianced husband, but no one else ; and he on that point may refuse to conclude the marriage. If this court be prepared to transfer the rights

vested in her by contract, from the appellant to the defendant,—then it only remains with me to add, that the appellant is determined how to act. The court has the power of ordering, but not of imprisoning; and the appellant would prefer quitting her father's house, and living years in ignominy and exile, to submitting to restrictions which she would consider both cruel and unjust, after the sacrifice she has consented to make."

After further apologizing to the court, the young lawyer bowed, and took his seat.

The chancellor of the court now asked, "Is the president to understand that the contracted parties have never seen each other?"

"Never!" was the reply.

"Then there exists no personal affection on either side?"

"None whatever."

"The defendant, therefore, cannot state to the president that there has been any injury inflicted, when the husband has not fulfilled his agreement?"
(no answer.)

The president then spoke :—

“ The court understands, that the youth in question is a distinguished knight; and knights, in France, have great privileges. For the dignity and character of the sex, I wish such an appeal had not come before the court; but all women, either married, considered as married, or contracted to be married, come under its protection; and among the two latter, the case of the appellant undoubtedly must be classed.

“ The contract, though wrong in itself, is positively clear; and with some pain, but without hesitation, we decide for the appellant, recommending to herself that strictness of conduct which best befits the character and honor of the sex.”

A burst of approbation followed the declaration of the president; and the triumphant Lyonnese vanished from the court, eager to escape the compliments which awaited his success.

The high personages withdrew in solemn state; and the ladies of the court were cheered as they passed through the assembled multitude, in which

applause their own sex took the loudest and most active part.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE CHALLENGE.

ON the following day Reginald received a summons to attend the Pope in the hall of state, where ambassadors from Rome were waiting an audience. John entered, attended by a numerous suite, among whom was his secretary Petrarch.

“ You are come, sirs,” said John, addressing the plenipotentiaries. “ from our subjects of Rome ? ”

“ Most holy sire,” answered the chief of the embassy, “ we are deputed by the council of fifty to pray your highness to return with your court to Rome, there to be established, as by strict rule and right of papal dominion required. Failing in this their humble prayer, we are directed to say that the council are determined to take the necessary steps for the arrangement of public affairs,

and, in due time and season, to proceed to the election of another Pope ;—a measure required for the advantage of the church, and the prosperity of the people.”

“ Nothing, my children,” replied His Holiness, “ could more gratify me, or be more accordant with my own desires, than to be able to comply with the wishes of my subjects ; but you must be well aware that Italy is in a state of insurrection. You know the effects produced by the factions of the Guelfs and Ghibellines : you know the roads are unsafe for travellers, and that even our holy city of Rome is disturbed by party-spirit ; and lastly, you must acknowledge, that an old man of eighty is unequal to so long and perilous a journey. Before your departure, hear us thus farther. I create Robert, king of Naples, senator of Rome ; and make Giacomo Sabelli, and Stephano Colonna, consuls. Now let me exhort you, my children, to live in peace and amity among yourselves, and to oppose Louis of Bavaria, a tyrant, a heretic, and an enemy of the church.”

“ Before you depart, ambassadors, hear me

Bertrand de Lunheim :—I hereby assert that the decrees of Louis of Bavaria, Emperor of the West, and King of Lombardy, are just and true ; and that he has lawful right to direct, regulate, and control the possessors of the throne and patrimony of St. Peter ; in support of which, there is my gage, which I will redeem in the field of tourney.”

“ I, Reginald of Montserrent and Montauban, deny the existence of this right.”

Robert d'Artois and the Dauphin had both started up ; but the primate said, —“ You are husbands and fathers ; let this young knight, as ambassador of France, oppose the envoy of Bavaria.”

The chancellor ordained that the challenge should be considered as a matter of ceremony, and whichever knight unhorsed his adversary should be declared victor. This decision relieved the minds of the fair ladies, who were anxious that the festivities should close without bloodshed or quarrel.

The court-yard of the castle of Villeneuve was prepared for the combat, and all the spectators were seated, when the two knights entered. The signal

was given. Reginald received the point of De Lunheim's spear on his shield, from which it glanced; while the lance of Reginald took full effect, and De Lunheim staggered back, causing his horse to rear. Reginald took advantage of this; and, closing with his adversary, grasped him round the waist, and lifted him from his horse. Unwilling to disgrace a brave knight, Reginald replaced him on his horse, and extended his hand, which De Lunheim grasped with warmth, while he said, "The field is yours, but your courtesy shall not prevent my publishing the decrees which Louis is prepared to enforce by arms: when the sports are over, His Holiness shall hear them."

The trumpet sounded for the "mêlée." The ladies were accustomed to stimulate their knights by throwing to them favors, which consisted of a scarf, a veil, net for the hair, a sleeve, a mantle, a bracelet, a knot of hair or riband, a buckle, or some detached piece of their dress: these favors were often lost, but they were replaced by others thrown to them; and none durst attack a knight, except when prepared for defence: shouts of ap-

plause, exclamations of joy, screams when the favored fell, resounded through the air, and at last the tournament closed. Robert d'Artois, Rodolphe, and Reginald were declared victors, and they advanced to receive the prizes.

The scene that now presented itself cannot be more humorously nor more truly described, than in the words of an ancient and naïf chronicler:—

“ Les dames se trouvèrent si dénuées de leurs atours, que la plus grande partie étoit en pur chef: elles s'en alloient les cheveux sur leurs épaules, et leurs cottes sans manches, car toutes étoient données aux chevaliers, pour eux parer; et quimples et chaperons, manteaux et camises, manches et habits. Quand elles se virent à tel point, elles en furent ainsi comme toutes honteuses; mais sitôt qu'elles virent que chacune étoit dans le même état, elles se prirent toutes à rire de leur aventure.”

Suffice it to say, that Reginald saw with pleasure the superiority of Cecile, and thought some of the ladies might have been less ardent.

CHAP. XXX.

LE JEU D'AMOUR.

WHEN Charles of France, with his Queen Marie de Luxemburg, and accompanied by kings and princes, took up his abode at Toulouse, seven of the principal citizens, who had formed an academy called “*La Gaie Société de sept Troubadours*,” offered a prize of a golden violet to the author considered worthy of being crowned. These seven mainteneurs justly considered that the protection of the king, himself a patron of men of letters, would aid the final establishment of their society on an extended scale. The Princess Isabelle was named to preside over the *Jeu d’Amour*; and announced the prize to be a silver rose, and Laura de Sade was selected as the person who was to bestow it on the successful candidate. The subject of competition was Plato’s Theory of Love. Laura was seated under a canopy, around which

gilded Cupids were suspended by imperceptible wires amidst garlands of real roses.

Four candidates appeared. The first that addressed the court was one of the *mainteneurs* of Toulouse.

“ Although I perceive among my opponents one whose talents as a lawyer are undeniable ;—one whose classical attainments are highly and deservedly lauded ;—one who is acknowledged by all to be a worthy disciple of the school of Plato ;—one who has the advantage of being born, and latterly educated on the soil which gave birth to the great genius* who enlightened the age in which he lived, and who, by remodelling and revivifying the language of his own country, has thrown into shade that of the Provençal ;—yet, as a *Troubadour* of Toulouse, I will venture to dispute even with the Italian scholar for the high honor to be adjudged by the chaste hand of loveliness. The question to be argued is the advantage or disadvantage of the theory of Plato.

* Dante.

“ As a true Troubadour, I am bound to uphold that which we have endeavoured to imitate. The object of Plato was to inculcate the principles of virtue, and to soften the heart by the powers of a chaste passion ; the object of the true Troubadour should be not only to improve the heart, but inspire the brain, by love. What says Bernard de Ventadour ? ‘ It is love inspires my pen : its penetrating influence embellishes my song : lovers can alone touch the ear, and charm the heart. The heart is the seat of love.’ Plato says, and the Troubadours believe, that the passion of love can exist without weakening the ties of virtuous restriction ; nay more, many of the Troubadours maintain, that they, as true disciples of the school of Plato, add weight to the doctrine of their master, by the happy influence of their conduct and example.

“ Their first passion is love ; their first aim is the favor of the object of their love. How seek they to gain it ? By improving the talents confided to their care, by giving vent to the feelings of their heart in the language of poetry ; not imitating Anacreon or Sappho ; Ovid or Catullus ;—but chas-

tening and tempering the words of fire in the snows of purity, by imagining the object of their love to be of a heavenly nature, and as such admiring and worshipping them. This not only raises the fair-one thus worshipped in her own estimation; but, extending its magic influence around the sentiment expressed by the Troubadour, gains possession of the hearts of others; and they languish to be so admired, so feared,—yet so loved.

“ Thus are the doctrines of Plato established in an extended sphere, and thus doth the Troubadour prove the truth,—the advantage of a system, which must ameliorate the hearts, and improve the conditions, of the fair ornaments of our terrestrial paradise.”

The Troubadour took his seat, and a youth, dressed in a plain garb of green, rose to reply.

“ I feel, ladies of the court, the deepest embarrassment in contending against so experienced a Troubadour and so eloquent a scholar, for the prize to be by you adjudged to him who is deemed worthy of the enamelled crown. I see that I have also to contend against the young Lyonnese, who,

in the cause lately decided, proved himself so worthy of the trust reposed in him, and so capable of arguing successfully either for or against the doctrines maintained by the learned doctor of Toulouse.

“ The learned doctor has told you that the Troubadours have mainly contributed to establish the truth of the theory of Plato. May I not ask, has not the order of chivalry aided that cause as strongly as that of poetry ? Look to the education of a page, and you see that, after his highest duty, devotion to the fair sex is instilled into his breast : he is taught to select a lady famed equally for virtue and beauty, and to refer to her all his actions, nay, to disclose his very thoughts. As a knight, the youth is still bound to adore, as a model of perfection, the mistress of his choice, and not to indulge in pride because success is granted to his endeavours after glory. ‘ If,’ says the hermit to King Artus, ‘ you had as many kingdoms as Alexander, as much wisdom as Solomon, and as much valour as Hector ; pride alone, if that reigns in you, will ruin all.’ If pride, which brings a legion of vices in its train, gain possession of your heart, you will

disdain to obey the counsels of a woman ; you will look to the object of your affection as to the slave of your desires ; and, disdaining the doctrines of Plato, you will become the follower of Epicurus.

“ But for a knight to remain worthy of being a disciple of Plato, it is necessary that the mistress of his heart should be a follower of the same school. Let not the knight be dispirited by the coldness and chastity of his love ; rather let him seek to win her to his arms by the glory of his achievements. ‘ Like unto the nightingale, who never ceased to sing with melody and transport in the service of his beloved, till she had shown herself favorable to his prayers,—so the knights, at the sight of beauty, softness, and the enchanting tenderness of virgin chastity, filled the universe with their valour, and echoed the praises of their mistresses, until they had disarmed the rigour of the ladies whom they thus served, and received their just reward.’ Thus have I, as an admirer of chivalry, attempted to maintain the pretensions of the knight against those of the Troubadour ;

equally admitting the powers and usefulness of Plato's theory.

“ Servants of Love, look fervently up to the exalted seats of those angels of paradise ; then you shall joust with valour, and be honored and cherished.”

The ladies seemed pleased with the brief speech of the young chivalrist, who certainly had the advantage of beauty and oratory, if he had not that of argument, over his antagonist. Silence being restored, the young Lyonnese lawyer came forward, and, gracefully bowing to the assembly, thus commenced :—

“ It is imprudent, it is perhaps impertinent, in me to address this honorable court, on whose time I have before too long intruded ; but national pride prevents me from yielding, without a struggle, to the representatives of Toulouse and Paris.

“ I stand here on behalf of Lyons, and will maintain my position,—viz. that the theory of Plato is dangerous to society. I do not mean to say that no such thing as virtue exists ; but I do

mean to say, that with the strictest principles of virtue, the indulgence of a Platonic passion places that virtue in danger; and strong indeed must be the barriers which prudence provides to resist the temptations presented by such indulgence.

“ If we look to the heathen mythology, we find no such passion known. It is true, that we find Juno a virago, and Minerva an Amazon : but Jupiter, in his amours, is only surpassed by Hercules; and with none of the gods or goddesses do we see an idea existing of such a passion as Plato preaches. It is true, that we hear Diana was chaste, and that her love for Endymion was figurative; meaning that, as Luna, she smiled on the student of astronomy. Whether shepherds were in those days astronomers, or moons disciples of Plato, I must leave to men of learning (like some I see near me) to decide; but, leaving the path of mythology, let us look to the heroes and scholars of antiquity. We have instances of continence in Alexander and Scipio; but would it have been prudent for a general to indulge his passions? Alexander had

his Lais, Cæsar his Cleopatra, and even Socrates his Theodota. But, among the ancients, there is one pre-eminent in the annals of love, and that is Sappho. Of that impassioned poetess, Plutarch says, ‘What she sings is a composition of fire; her verses are the emission of the flame she has in her heart.’ Her description of the signs of love were so accurate, that Erasistratus discovered that the illness of Antiochus arose out of a passion for Stratonice, the wife of his father, who resigned her to save the life of his son. Her Hymn to Venus was preserved by Dionysius Halicarnassus, as an example of perfection to all succeeding ages. Longinus has preserved an ode, which proves that her passions were not Platonic; and this very ode is quoted by Plutarch as a proof, ‘that love is a divine fury, which causes more violent enthusiasm than those of the priests of Delphos, the Bacchantes, or the priests of Cybele.’

“After the death of her husband, Sappho renounced marriage, but not love: she sacrificed all her passions to Phaon, but without reference to Plato. If we may believe Ovid, Phaon deserted

his love, because she never even dreamt of the philosopher or his theory; and the forsaken fair, in the fury of her passion and her despair, threw herself from the Leucadian promontory, and perished in the waves.

“ Others have attempted the same mode to cure their passion, and, once released from the briny element, have resigned themselves to Plato, or sought consolation elsewhere. Were I not in the hall of the Head of the Church, I might allude to the two great characters of the Jewish history,—I mean David and Solomon,—where we can find no traits of the establishment of the theory of Plato. Having spoken thus generally, let me allude to the arguments brought forward in favor of this doctrine. The Docteur en Science speaks of Bernard de Ventadour. Was he a disciple of Plato? Hear his own words: ‘ When love is not mutual, what does it avail? I will sing no more: I will depart from hence: no, I will stay. My constancy will perhaps touch the dear object from whom in vain I attempt to fly.’ Does not this portray hope? and when, seated under a large oak,

he receives a kiss from the lady of his love, does he not compare it to the lance of Achilles, alone capable of curing the wound it had inflicted? May we not argue, from his subsequent conduct, that he never dreamt of Plato?—and for his indiscretions, he was banished by the husband of the fair, and she herself immured in prison. This same Platonist then sought Eleanor of Guicenne, the wife of Henry the Second of England, famous for her gallantries; and was by her cordially received. So much for the character the learned doctor brings forward as an example, or at least as an authority. But I will not leave the Troubadour even the point of generality; for I maintain, that the object of all those wandering bards was the possession of the person, as well as the hearts of those, whom they considered they honored by their devotion.

“ In arguing whether he should choose his lady-love to be his wife or mistress, Gui d’Uisel says, ‘ The faith of a lover is more honorable than that of a husband, for the shame of inconstancy is his bond; and if he sins against love, he offends all the

laws of gallantry, and is for ever disgraced.' Having decided, therefore, that his lady-love should be his mistress, and not his wife, he makes her the proposal; but she, without reference to Plato, discards him, and names another.

“ We will now come to chivalry; and the first Troubadour on record was a Chevalier—William, Count of Poitou: he was vicious and witty, and his example was followed by other crusaders. In short, we have only to look to history, and particularly to that of the knights templars, to become in dread of a chevalier, almost as much as of a Troubadour. Albert, Marquis of Malaspina, who was a knight and Troubadour, is accused by a brother bard as being guilty of a robbery on the high-road; and the bard recommends the Marquis to marry his own mistress, who has deceived him, as he considers them fit companions for each other. But I will not fatigue this august assembly by dwelling on such themes:—before I close, however, there is one point upon which it is necessary to make an observation. The handsome youth who preceded me, seemed to lay great stress on the comparison

between the nightingale and the knight. In a conversation between two Troubadours, we find this question:—‘ Which ought to use the most ardent endeavours to please,—the lover already rewarded, or the lover in the state of uncertainty and hope?’ The reply is, ‘ the former, undoubtedly.’ ‘ This,’ says the querist, ‘ is contrary to fact, both in animal and human nature. The nightingale, while he is pursuing his mate, exerts all his skill, and sings with the most enchanting melody; but when possessed of his fair one, his notes become careless, and his song rude and unpolished: and so it is with mankind; when they are secure of what they wish, they become indifferent and inattentive.’ For my part, I think the nightingale would have been a better simile in the mouth of the Troubadour, than that of the chevalier: but I warn you, ladies, you female disciples of Plato, to beware of both. Beware also, not only of the black and scarlet, but of the white cloth likewise: place no confidence in yourselves, and avoid temptation. If, on the contrary, you trust in Plato, and believe in the arguments of the lovers of song

and chivalry, your fair fame may be sacrificed to the vanity of the bard, whose tongue will publicly celebrate your charms ; or to that of the knight, who will display your golden tresses on his burnished casque."

When the young Lyonnese took his seat, there were interchanges of signs to express approbation or disapprobation of his argument, which Reginald considered conclusive against both the knight and the Troubadour. Petrarch now rose, and all eyes were immediately turned towards him :—" If," he commenced, " I were to express all that I feel in again venturing to offer myself to public attention, some sensations of pity might arise in the breasts of the beautiful and illustrious who compose this honorable court. I need not ask an impartial hearing ; of that I am assured :—but I ask that the lovely president should banish from her mind all the graces which adorned the eloquence of my opponent, so lately my coadjutor. I am also disheartened by the recollection, that it was the eloquence of that opponent which gained the cause of our mutual client. I did not then use the

strength of language which I shall now venture to adopt ; for, on the face of the appeal, it was not apparent that the passion acknowledged to exist was of that order which comes more immediately under the theory it is now my intention to uphold. To those who are unacquainted with the classic authors of Greece and Italy, it may not be superfluous to say, that the ancients supposed there were two, and, according to Cicero, three deities, worshipped under the name of Cupido. While the Roman orator assumes there were three, Hesiod, the most ancient theologist, speaks but of one, while Plato recognizes two. As our argument relates to the theory of Plato, we will consider the powers of these two deities ; one of whom is described as a sportive child, the supposed son of Jupiter and Venus ; while the other is as mischievous as debauched, and the offspring of Nox and Erebus. As there is a difference of opinion as to the little god, so is there as to his mother. Plato names two ; Venus Urania, and Venus Popularia : Popularia alludes to the people of the earth, while Urania directly signifies, of heavenly nature. Among the

attributes of Venus, the lovely flower which is to reward the happy scholar who bears away the chaplet, stands pre-eminent. The mythologists unite in the goddess Venus a variety of powers, and particularly make her, as Urania, to watch over the beauty and increase of the inhabitants of the world :—thence comes *Populæria*, her subordinate title. Plato wishes to establish his republic upon the solid basis of incorruptible morals, and the intercourse of mankind released from the dominion of voluptuous passion. To enforce this doctrine, he displays the greatest refinement of philosophy, eloquence, and argument, when he tells you that Socrates declares it to be perfectly within the bounds of nature to admire the beauties of woman, without wishing to indulge the desires which such beauties produce ;—and yet Socrates had his passions. It is not necessary here to discuss the accusation against the ancients, who were described as secretly sacrificing themselves to the earthly, while they professed to worship the heavenly goddess. Such conduct would be base hypocrisy ; and to minds capable of such suspicions, I leave their

discussion, while I defend the principles upon which Plato founded his theory, and endeavour to attest the possibility of their existence. Xenophon, the rival of Plato, equally brings Socrates forward as the standard, on whose opinions such a theory may be upheld. We will take the following as an example of argument: ‘The light which illumines that beauty, directs me to contemplate the soul which inhabits the same form; and if the soul and body be equally beautiful, can we refrain from loving? Purity constitutes the beauty of the soul, and the purity I love makes me also virtuous: corrupt the morals, and the soul which you wished to see perfect is debased, the deformity even extending to the features. Be assured, that Venus Popularia inflames the passions of the body, while Urania inspires only a love for the soul, and leads mortals to ties of love connected with virtuous actions.’ Without entering into the opinion of the learned theologian, who has endeavoured to reconcile the doctrines of Plato with those of Christianity, I shall clothe myself with this armour of defence. I come not as the author of such

theory ; I come not, like Mahomet, to enforce such doctrines with the sword : I appear here, not to gain proselytes to a sect which has been accused of propagating opinions calculated to overthrow the foundations of society, by weakening the ties which secure the happiness of the sexes at the foot of the altar ; but I come here to prove, such a case may exist as will establish the possibility of the theory.

“ Before I proceed further, let me be permitted to allude to the recent decision of the *Cour d'Amour*. It is true, that the prerogatives of its power were extended, but I think judiciously extended ; because the court was originally meant,—while it increased the liberties of the softer sex, then in a state of degradation,—to guard the loveliest productions of nature from defamation or from indulgence in temptation ;—an indulgence arising from the shadowy reasoning that, where female character is lost to the world, virtue need no longer be considered as worthy of being guarded. The case which was submitted to the court appeared, in the course of the argument, to be founded upon the

principles of the theory of Plato ; and so long as it so appeared, the decision was one of justice, as well as of expediency.

“ It has been absurdly imagined that the system of Plato is inconsistent with the rights of marriage : this is by no means the case ; he says that our souls emanate from heaven, but are pre-existent to our bodies, in other worlds ; and that those which are most tender inhabit the planet Venus ; that the most perfect love those that are most perfect, but that they are connected together on earth by a predestined sympathy ; and, without partaking of the sensualities of the body, are blindly led to procreate the human species. This opinion must have been delivered, as looking to the civil institutions of man, concurring with such religious ordinations as the church should command. The philosophic Greek, on whom the glorious light of our blessed religion had not shed its beams, formed his reasoning on the certainty that a Power superior to man created the world and its inhabitants. He believed there were other worlds, and felt that the soul was immortal ; but he was surrounded by a mass of

wickedness, and opposed by a stultified adherence to such principles as were palatable to the vicious and luxurious. He saw the state of society, and wished to reclaim it. How useless would it have been to threaten everlasting punishment to those who imagined that their existence ended in the ashes which their urns contained! Yet Plato continued his exertions, and perseverance was successful. Wherever his doctrines were implicitly obeyed, the system of morals was improved; and the theory which he established in a Pagan, has been adopted in a Christian country.

“ I could not, I would not, dare to stand forth in the palace of our holy Father,—of him who holds the keys of St. Peter on earth,—of him who is the head of the Christian church,—to decorate with false colors the theory which I have upheld. There may have been, and probably again will be, a state of society which might be benefited by such principles; but the theory is one so liable to error, so subject to false construction,—that with the generality of mankind it must be fatal. Hitherto, I have conducted my argument as if I were addressing a

court of equity, instead of a court of love; but when I view around me such distinguished persons; when I see the heads of the church, the savans of Toulouse, with princes, counts, and barons assembled,—I may perhaps be excused by the rest of my illustrious auditors, for having conducted my argument too philosophically; for having appealed to the head, rather than to the heart.

“ It is not, however, my intention to abandon my point of proof: but here I may be permitted to make one remark. The young admirer of chivalry, whose fair and flowing locks are emblems of the purity of his soul and the eloquence of his tongue,—has ably pleaded the cause of Plato. My opponent attacks his simile. Hear my reply to that of the nightingale, and the lover, who, after being successful, becomes indifferent. What says the supporter of fidelity and gratitude? ‘ Merit cannot be weakened by possession, nor true tenderness lessened by reward; and the example of the nightingale is of no value; a bird being incapable of knowledge, sentiment, and re-

flection. For my own part, I am never so solicitous to please, as when I am treated with tenderness and love.' My eloquent opponent, perhaps not himself a disciple of Plato, will possibly admit that gratitude may establish fidelity, but that virtue will ensure it. All men are not so ungrateful as the nightingale, nor are all Troubadours and chevaliers so truant to their honor, as to sing of their loves, or to display their favors: for my part, I must speak to my proof. I see before me many beauteous women, who are loved by, and who love, those to whom they have been allied either by circumstances or by destiny: they feel, they know that they are happy; and do not inquire whether that happiness arises from predestination, or is merely permitted by the beneficence of Providence; they acknowledge the existence of their felicity, and love the virtue which upholds it: but we will suppose the case of one 'whose soul burns with the desire to meet its companion;' of one whose pleasures and whose sufferings are inexpressible; of one who endeavours to make his feelings known to another for whom he sighs; who

sees the celestial light which burns in her eye, the immortal beauty which beams in her countenance; whose heart feels daily less tendency to earth, and is excited to the exaltation and purification of virtue: in proportion as the affections of such a lover are lifted towards God, in the same proportion are the pains of exile upon earth increased, and the suffering soul desires to be freed from its captivity to matter, and to be joined to the object of its adoration in heaven. We are taught that there are no marriages in heaven; but we may hope that there exists a union of sentiment, a sympathy of soul:—and, for my part, I can truly assert, that, impure as I am, I live but in the eyes of one who is all purity:—

‘ On the wings of imagination I often soar to heaven :
Blessed be the day, the month, the year,—
Blessed be the country and the place,—
Where I was captivated by her lovely eyes!
And blessed be the first dear torment
That I suffered, when Love had wounded me.
May also the bow, and its arrows, that pierced me,
Be blessed, and the wounds that have penetrated
To my heart; and blessed be the breath that I have spent
In calling on the name of her I love!—

And the sighs, and the tears, and the pains,
That she has been the cause of!
And blessed be all the paper on which I
Have traced her name,—
And my thoughts that arise but for her!”

The long and loud applauses of the court proclaimed Petrarch triumphant; and he was led by two pages to the throne whereon Laura was seated, and received at her hands the garland which entitled him to the prize of the silver rose.

This was indeed a proud scene for Laura, as well as for Petrarch. No human being can be so cold, so inanimate, so heartless, as not to feel the force of adoration, delicately expressed. Petrarch's language was pure, unadulterated Platonism: he considered Laura as an angel on earth, and longed to see and commune with her soul freed from its mortal frame, freed from human frailties, from human caprices. Laura knew, as did every one present, who was the cause of the sighs, the tears, and the pains; but still she, in bestowing the garland, was all grace, all kindness, perhaps all compassion; but there was no—at least no apparent—love.

CHAP. XXXI.

DECLARATIONS.

ON the morning of the day fixed by the envoy for the publication of the Emperor's decisions, Hermann requested an audience. Our old acquaintance, the green man, was not fond of many words, and certainly Hermann never selected a worse opportunity; but he was admitted. On entering the small apartment in which the Count was seated, preparing, over a bottle of wine, for the affairs of the day, Hermann felt it was a difficult case which he had to speak upon.

“ Well, boy, what do you come here for?” inquired his sire.

“ To say,” replied the youth, “ that I desire to leave the service of the Primate.”

“ And why?” responded De Lunheim, drinking as he spoke.

“ He refused, before the tournament, to give me the cross of St. Maurice.”

“ He served you rightly for your impertinence in asking it : but I will give you an answer this evening as to your future employment. Leave the room.”

The German finished his bottle, and very leisurely proceeded to dress himself in proper costume for the important occasion. He arrived in the court-chamber, and found every thing duly arranged. The officer in waiting declared, that the father of the church was prepared to hear the ambassador from Bavaria ; upon which the German, with his accustomed gravity, commenced :—

“ I Bertrand, Count de Lunheim, &c. &c. &c. on the part of Louis of Bavaria, do hereby give this document into the hands of Pope John.” After the paper had been received, he added :—“ If I had followed my orders strictly, I must have commanded my herald at arms to read aloud that document ; but I have received such kind attentions during my residence in your city of Avignon, that I could not, even soldier as I am, obey orders.

when those orders would oblige me to insult a venerable and princely personage. I must now add, that my positive directions are, to state the Emperor's intention of proceeding to Rome, and of being again crowned in that capital. He commands, therefore, that His Holiness should order his cardinal legates to perform that ceremony, if his own health renders it impossible for him to attend. In failure of this, the Emperor further instructs me to say that it is his intention to consider the holy chair vacant, and to proceed to another election."

The envoy made an obeisance, and retired to his own apartment. Having unrobed, and resumed his bottle, he sent for Hermann, whom he thus addressed:—"What induced you to think of obtaining a decoration to which you were not entitled?"

"My services in the war of Guienne," answered his son.

"Every one who served in that war has a similar claim; but, nevertheless, I wish the Prince had granted your request: I dare say he had some strong reason to the contrary: you may as

well tell the truth ; for, as soon as I have finished this bottle, I shall visit him, having some disagreeables to break to His Highness."

" His Highness said that I was a spy upon his actions," replied the young man.

" And were you such a villain ?"

" What I did, I was induced to do from my regard for your honor, and from a belief that, if you put away your present wife, you would marry my mother."

" You have said enough : I will be the guardian of my own honor ; and, what is more, I will never marry your mother. Be prepared to depart to-morrow wherever you will : I will find you the means ; but you shall not serve either the P^rimate or the E^mperor."

Hermann, somewhat abashed, left the room, and the honest and irritated German went to the P^rimate's apartments. He was received with the usual urbanity, and the Count began :—" I am very angry at myself for introducing into your household a villain who acknowledges himself to have been a spy on your Highness's actions : I have discarded him from

your service, and forbade his entering with us. He may go to Spain, Genoa, Venice, England, or the devil, if he likes, but he shall not carry arms in the German guard. That guard, I am compelled to say, must instantly follow me: your Highness has signed the treaty with the Dauphin; and it was the Emperor's orders, in case of such an event, that his subjects should return to their proper banners. I regret this, Sir Prince, and I wished you to be the first to know the bad tidings. I march on Monday."

When De Lunheim had left the apartment, Hermann entered: he threw himself on his knees, confessed his ingratitude, delivered up his sword, and was about to retire. The Primate said, "It appears to me, that you had a laudable motive for a base action, and that motive misled you. Here is a purse of gold, and I return your sword." Hermann replied, "I can only requite you by one act; and though it revolts against my nature, I will do it."

CHAP. XXXII.

A QUARREL.

WHILE De Lunheim was arranging the foregoing business relative to his disgraced son, Reginald was closeted with the Pope and Petrarch: but from this conference they retired dissatisfied, for John expected too much, and yielded too little. As they walked towards the bridge, Petrarch asked what measure he had determined upon?

“ I shall forthwith fulfil my promise and depart,” was the answer.

“ Fair and softly, my young friend!” said a gentle voice; “ if fulfil, promise, and depart, are your words, I must interpose my authority.”

Petrarch had suspected, in the course of the speech of the young Lyonnese, that the gown covered no less a personage than Mademoiselle Cecile; and from the present remark, he began to entertain suspicions unworthy of a Platonist: but

unwilling to be present at any scene of quarrel, he withdrew, leaving the muffled stranger with his friend ; saying, “ you will hear from me to-morrow, or you will find me at the Cardinal’s.”

As the stranger led Reginald in a different direction, the conversation was thus continued :—“ This is not the first time you have seen me in this lawyer’s habit, nor shall it be the last : you have promised to take me to Grenoble. Robert d’Artois is here ; and nothing prevents our departure, as the revelry is over.”

“ I have other duties to fulfil,” said Reginald, gravely.

“ Is it not your first duty to fulfil your promise to me ?”

“ But I must travel to a foreign country, and fight for our Holy Father.”

“ What has the avaricious old fool given you for this last battle ? You shake your head, meaning to answer—nothing : I expected he would have bestowed a chest of gold for that single glove of the brave German ; but there is no such thing as gratitude on earth. John is ungrateful to you,

and you to me: but I have not seen you alone since my triumph: and now that I am established in liberty, my father is all humility, calls me his friend, his wise daughter, and tells me that his hands are washed of me, and I may please myself. Now, my pleasure is, that you shall sup with me. I followed you to the spot where you seemed to consider yourself as your own master; but I will teach you, proud knight, that I am mistress."

"I am not my own master, nor can you now be my mistress; I must go."

"Then go, at your peril!"

Reginald turned away, and retraced his steps hastily to the bridge: Cecile remained in astonishment. "What, gone without a word?" exclaimed she: "cruel, ungrateful, barbarous Reginald!" She burst into tears and leant against the wall. Lorenzo was passing by, and, hearing the sobs of one in distress, asked if he could be of any service.

"Yes," answered the damsel; "I have quarrelled with a friend: he has deeply wounded me; tell him I entreat to see him before I die. He knows where

I live: speed! He is covered with a green mantle, and there—there he is—fly!” Cecile rallied sufficient strength to reach her home, while her messenger overtook the object of his pursuit. The knight in the green mantle was leaning on the battlement of the bridge, the Rhone rapidly but tranquilly rolling beneath his feet, and his eyes apparently fixed on the glittering moon-beams.

“ I am commissioned, sir, to entreat you to visit your friend whom you have wounded.” Reginald turned round.

“ My general,” pursued Lorenzo; “ surely you could not have fought against a civilian,—nay, a boy!”

“ The lawyer is no boy, Lorenzo, nor have we fought; there was only a slight disagreement.”

“ O, now I guess! a lover’s quarrel. Do you know, Reginald, they whisper that you were the pleader for chivalry in green color and false locks, and ——”

“ Never mind whispers: walk with me. The Primate, in consequence of the late treaty, intends to diminish the number of his troops; my services

are no longer wanted ; you will be my successor ; but, I pray you, discharge Claudine ; and, if you cannot live singly, marry Eleonore."

" But suppose Eleonore will not marry me ?"

" Well, then, wait patiently until better fortune arrives ; but do not let that brunette's smiles withdraw you from your happy and accomplished family circle. The Count de Lunheim has orders to withdraw the Germans ; your activity must supply their loss. Forget Claudine, and think only of the Prince, your sovereign. Good night !"

In this conversation Reginald had regained self-command ; and as Cecile evidently made the first offer towards reconciliation, he was in hopes of finding her more reasonable and tractable. The major-domo was in waiting, and Alice received him, saying :—" My mistress is very unwell : she has retired to her room ; but said, if any message came from you, she was to be apprised. I suppose she will prefer the messenger to a message."

Alice was quite right. No one looks lovely in tears, whatever romances or poetry may say : grief

had subsided, and Cecile received her lover with her usual smiles.

“ You saw Lorenzo,” said she ; “ you came, and I forgive you.” Reginald fully explained, and was fully pardoned : Alice was summoned, and ordered to prepare refreshments, in doing which, her zeal was heightened by an opportune gift of a well-loaded purse from the liberal hand of Reginald.

“ I am afraid, my knight, you will think me a great gourmande,” cried Cecile ; “ but in your absence all appetite flies, and I live, like the cameleon, on air. Now hear my reasons for wishing you not to embark in this enterprise :—be assured, it will fail. The Duke of Calabria has no talent for war : his soldiers will not assist you. The Legate has troops, but they are of a very inferior character : the Romans, under Colonna, will only fight for plunder ; and your men-at-arms will be cramped in vessels, and half their nerves unstrung. It is not only parting with you, my love, that I dread, but it is a diminution of the lustre that now surrounds your rising fame.”

“ I proffered my services,” replied De Vavasour, “ and they were accepted: it is true, my plans are counteracted by John; but I had promised Colonna to share his danger, and I am now called on to fulfil my promises. Would you hesitate, in such a situation?”

“ My love blinds me, and yet I will pause: promise me, whether successful or unsuccessful, to return forthwith. If you gain Rome, leave the defence of it to others: trust not yourself with that fickle people, who, instead of respecting your courage, would, with the very stones of their streets, inflict on you martyrdom. If you fail, place your men in safe quarters, and come here to repose your sorrows in my bosom.”

The lover parted from his fascinating mistress with regret: but he left her composed, apparently satisfied with the pledge she had obtained, and certainly more enamoured than ever. She had cut off a tress of her hair; he placed it next his heart.

He could not conceal from himself the justice of Cecile's remarks, and wondered how she had obtained her information. Alice could have thrown

some light on the subject, by disclosing certain meetings tête-à-tête with the green man.

As soon as Reginald had retired, Cecile collected her writing materials; made notes of every thing she had heard, of the particulars relative to the Duke of Calabria, &c. to send to her knight; concluding with remarks, as to what would be the most advisable manner of conciliating the various interests. “As for the military operations,” said she, “I know nothing about them; therefore, if I recommended any thing, you would either call, or think me a fool: but I have conversed with Robert d’Artois, and another person. There is one secret I will tell you; viz.—wise people say that defeat gives prudence, and that prudence will moderate self-confidence, without destroying its good effects. These sayings, more than your adventurous spirits, satisfy me that all may be better for the future, though something may be worse for the present.—Adieu, adieu!”

CHAP. XXXIII.

THE ENTERPRISE.

POPE JOHN sent an express to the Cardinal Legate, directing him to form a junction with the Duke of Calabria's troops, in order to harass the Emperor's army in its advance; and then to retire by the coast-road to Civita Vecchia, leaving the forces of the Duke to cover the direct road to Rome. The Cardinal arrived with John, Prince of the Morea, brother of the King of Naples, at his destination, and there found two ships cruising under Genoese colors. Prince John put off in a boat, and having given the signal agreed on, was answered, and he rowed towards the vessel on board of which was Reginald. Having consulted as to the best mode of proceeding, it was determined to send for the Cardinal, leaving the troops in a wood near the town. Reginald and the Prince, disguised as sailors, accompanied by Hawkwood,

went on shore, and procuring horses, entered Rome : Reginald and his esquire easily passed for Englishmen ; and, with some difficulty, they found the house of Stephano de Colonna. It was there settled, that on the following evening, the troops of Reginald, dressed as sailors, and aided by as many of the crew as could be spared, should arrive at the gate of — ; that Stephano should bribe the sentinels, and that the gates should be opened.

Every thing succeeded to their wishes. Reginald and Hawkwood asked, in English, to be admitted ; the Prince rushed past, and Reginald, with the advanced party, made themselves masters of the gate ; in consequence, the Cardinal Legate, with a division of his people, was shortly afterwards in possession of the church and quarter of St. Pierre. The faction in favor of the Emperor soon became acquainted with what had happened, and passed the night in preparation for attack. Reginald went at day-break to inspect his men, drawn up in the place before the church ; and having harangued them as to the necessity of determined courage, concluded by promising them rich rewards, and

good quarters. He also assured them of support from the troops of the Prince and Cardinal, as well as from the Guelf party. He then visited the church with Colonna; and having offered up a sincere prayer for divine protection in a just cause, examined the beauty of that ancient building, which the traveller now regards with intense curiosity, notwithstanding there stands above it the most splendid building in the world. The mosaics and sculpture both attracted his attention; and he stored his mind with fresh information for his friend Petrarch, whose curiosity was ardently alive to visit Rome.

Soon after his return to his soldiers, he perceived the citizens of Rome advancing on all sides: the attack was commenced by repeated volleys of stones, which had been collected during the night, and which came with surprising force, some thrown from the hand, and some from the sling. Colonna advised retreating upon the castle, as they had no arms but their swords. In cutting their way, half his party were wounded, some slightly, and some dangerously. The people collected had-

ders and firebrands: the Cardinal, much alarmed, determined to capitulate: Prince John decided upon retiring towards the kingdom of Naples: the troops were allowed to carry off their wounded; and on the outside of the gate they found the soldiers of the Cardinal, who covered their retreat to Civita Vecchia. From thence, the ships sailed to Mole de Gaeta, where the troops established themselves in good quarters and a strong position. Prince John thanked Reginald in the warmest terms for his zeal and conduct, and assured him that he would make a favorable report thereof to King Robert.

The Cardinal took an affectionate leave of his brave defender, and sent by him letters to His Holiness, stating how much they owed to the promptitude and valour of Sir Reginald, both in the attack and retreat; but as the troops of the Duke of Calabria had not been heard of, no enterprise could save Rome. The Emperor had meanwhile advanced on Pisa, which had closed its gates against him. Louis laid siege to that strong city, and took it by capitulation. The Duke of Calabria retired

upon Loretto, and thence, by the mountains, regained the kingdom of Naples. Reginald and Hawkwood, with a few attendants, reached Marseilles in safety.

It is not an easy task to paint the feelings of a haughty, aspiring, and ambitious youth, after a defeat, sustained under any circumstances; but when that defeat succeeds to a temporary triumph in such a city as imperial Rome, it is impossible. Reginald had fancied, before midnight, that he was the *Salvator Romæ*, the restorer of the Papal power, the hero, the conqueror!—and in the midst of his dreams, he became a defeated fugitive: “*sic transit gloria mundi.*” He determined on going to Vienne, and consulting the Primate as to the best means of breaking this bad news to His Holiness; but that would be loss of time; so he decided that it was best to enter Avignon after sun-set. Hawkwood went forward to Petrarch, and the latter waited on the Pope. When Reginald arrived, Petrarch was ready, by the desire of John, to conduct him to the palace.

“My son,” said His Holiness to our hero, “the

fault is not yours. We have lost Rome : we have lost Italy : but we still have the power which true religion gives ;—we still have our piety and our honor ! Retire to rest. The documents you have delivered, I will, with the aid of our secret council and Petrarch, fully attend to ; and to-morrow you shall know our resolution. Recollect, son Reginald, that even the sun, which shines o'er all, meets some checks, and its glory is sometimes eclipsed ; therefore, be content, and you will soon shine again in your fullest splendor.”

CHAP. XXXIV.

CONSOLATION.

REGINALD felt ashamed to visit Cecile, and commissioned Petrarch to break to her, in the morning, the tidings of his failure. When the bearer of his message arrived at the Maison de Cominges, he found Laura de Sade tête-à-tête with Cecile ; and Petrarch forgot the warrior, states-

man, and ambassador, in the charms of the half-willing, half-cruel audistress of his rhymes and his lamentations: the former she received second-hand from Cecile; and probably, as we have before said, did not understand one word of them; but the latter are easily comprehended.

While Petrarch was occupied in admiring this prodigy of the world,—she to whom air, earth, or water never produced an equal;—the paragon quietly demanded of Cecile whether she had seen the Marquis of Montserrent.

“No,” replied she: “is he returned?”

“My husband,” answered Madame, “informed me so last night: he heard it from his nephew, who was at the palace when the Marquis entered, and came to tell him the news before retiring to his quarters.”

“And why am I, Petrarch,” said Cecile, “the last to receive tidings of my knight?”

“Truly, Mademoiselle,” answered the scholar, “because he is your knight, and his enterprise has failed.”

“ Has he failed in courage or in truth ?” inquired Cecile.

“ The latter is impossible,” rejoined Petrarch ;
“ but his high spirit cannot brook defeat, and he was fearful of meeting your scorn.”

“ If he was unhappy, Franciscus, it was to me he should have come for consolation. If he returns defeated, he may recollect that Hannibal, one of the greatest generals of the world, fled after the battle of Zama ; and that Scipio, the same person who gained that battle, witnessed the effects of that of Cannæ, and was obliged to threaten personal destruction to the first that quitted Rome : mais le temps viendra ! we shall see the power of His Holiness re-established at Rome ; and Reginald will arrive, like another Camillus, to drive these Goths from their easily-acquired, but not so easily-retained dominion. If he knew Cecile de Cominges, he would also know, that she could not think one failure sufficient to prove a man unworthy of success.”

Petrarch awaited the conclusion of this ha-

range: he thought of Hannibal and Scipio; but not seeing the least link which could possibly lead to a comparison, began a mental search for some Grecian or Roman whose case might be more applicable. In this he was interrupted by the arrival of the defeated and dispirited hero.

“ Well, Sir Reginald,” began his mistress, “ you have adopted the mode in use among very many wise people, and made a hasty retreat from the bosom of *Alma Mater Romana* ?”

“ It is not very agreeable,” replied the knight, “ to be pelted to death with stones, or burnt with fire and fagot. So disagreeable a service I had not before witnessed ; and, by the faith of a knight, you shall never find me again fighting in *masquerade*.”

“ But you did fight, Sir Count ?”

“ Why, I cannot call it fighting, *Mademoiselle* ! we had a slight skirmish at the gate ; and we were in possession, one night, of the church of St. Peter and quarters adjacent.”

“ Ah, Reginald,” said Petrarch ; “ you have been in Rome !”

“ Yes, Franciscus, and in the cathedral,” replied De Vavasour. “ The mosaics are the most curious things I ever beheld ! ”

“ And pray, Sir Marquis,” inquired Cecile, “ how long did you stay there ? ”

“ Until the following day, Mademoiselle ; when we considered ourselves very fortunate in being able to reach our ships.”

“ Come, Reginald,” rejoined his mistress ; “ you might have confided in me. You are not disgraced ! ”

“ I trust not ; yet I know, by hearsay and reading, how much the opinions of the ladies depend upon the success in life of those whom they select for their favors :—but you warned me of my fate ! ”

“ I feel certain Laura agrees with me in thinking that, were Petrarch sent on an embassy to Paris, his first thoughts on returning should be of her ; so I, having chosen you for my sworn knight, (you, who had read my heart in all its naked simplicity,) was warranted in expecting that you would have flown immediately to assure me, you

were the same true chevalier who left Avignon as the defender of the **Red Rose**."

"And who returns to defend it, if defence be needed: but here every thing is delight, harmony, and peace."

When Laura retired, Petrarch received permission to escort her to her home.

"Well, Reginald," asked Cecile; "which do you prefer,—to love one who you know loves in return, yet dread her anger or censure; or to love one who turns a deaf ear to your protestations to-day, and listens to your declarations to-morrow; but who is not sufficiently interested in your welfare to express decidedly either approbation or disapprobation?"

"Your question I will met with another. Until Petrarch is Reginald, and Reginald Petrarch, Laura and Cecile will reign according to their different modes over their devoted slaves: for my part, I am willing to be a slave to your beauty, as I am anxious to be master over all the rest of the world. O Cecile, I have gained a lesson: you fore-

told it ;—but the failure is owing to the Pope, and he shall hear ——”

“ Reginald, beware of reproof there : court favor is of a slippery character ; and I know your temper too well to allow you to be sacrificed to intrigue. Let me speak to His Holiness, and justice shall be done.”

In the full assurance of unabated love, the evening passed rapidly away : the transition from pain to pleasure was too delicious to be soon abandoned ; therefore messengers from Robert d’Artois had made, to little purpose, their repeated visits to the Château de Villeneuve. No one there knew where their master was ; and none but his page was aware at what hour De Vavasour retired to his apartment.

CHAP. XXXIV.

THE SEPARATION.

IN the morning the messenger was admitted, and delivered a letter from Robert d'Artois, announcing the dangerous illness of King Charles, and his commands for Reginald's instant return to Paris. "Bring with you, my young friend," were the Prince's words, "an able statesman, on whom you can depend for talent and integrity;—such will soon be needed."

Reginald sent for Petrarch, who instantly attended; whom our hero thus addressed:—

"I have your advice to ask on two subjects:—the providing of an experienced statesman, and of a representative for me here."

When Petrarch had read the letter, he observed, "Our friend of Arras is the man; and you will thus be able at once to requite him for past ser-

vices, and to keep him from tormenting, in your absence, a certain giddy damsel with his silly passion :—and as for the representative, he shall soon appear.” A page was sent to the Count de Cominges, and the worthy scholiast soon made his appearance.

“ Here, sir,” said Reginald to him, “ are letters of presentation to the court of Rome during my absence.”

“ If zeal, and study of precedents,” answered De Cominges, “ can make up for want of practice, be assured, my Lord Marquis, of unabating attention. I think, for a general view of states, Cæsar may be studied ; and for their minute description, Tacitus : for exploits, I may take Xenophon ; and for characters and lives, Plutarch may be my guide : for elocution and public addresses, Demosthenes or Cicero ; and for the colloquial, Terence.”

“ Pray,” inquired Petrarch, “ does my worthy friend intend to read, write, and rehearse after the manner of the ancients ? for if he does, the ambassadors from Germany and Italy will leave you

as wise as they came : I doubt if the Pope himself would understand you."

This doubt seemed to the Count almost heresy. "The Pope," said he, "comprehends all things, both celestial and terrestrial."

"There is one thing terrestrial I dare say he does not comprehend," rejoined De Vavasour, laughing ;—"a woman."

"Perhaps not generally, and Madame Malraison particularly."

When the Pope was informed of the King's illness, he appeared much affected at the news, but hoped that, from his youth, Charles would speedily recover. "It is unfortunate," said his Holiness to De Vavasour, "that he should be attacked at a moment when his life was of such consequence, both to the kingdom of France, and to the throne of St. Peter. The possession of Rome by the Emperor is a severe blow ; and instead of my being enabled to place the King of France at the head of the empire, Louis may perhaps place another at the head of the church. It behoves us to be doubly zealous ; and if the king lives, we will make

provision for renewing our efforts, by enforcing the decree relative to church property."

"It is my intention," replied our hero, "to select the Bishop of Arras for my companion, and the Count de Cominges for my representative here."

"Certainly, my son," said John, "you will find none more able. If Charles dies, we must establish Philippe de Valois on the throne. He is no scholar, Count de Cominges," turning to the deputy, who had accompanied Reginald; "but he has abilities more useful than classical knowledge, for these unenlightened days: the times are perilous, and the reins of government must not be trusted in female hands; except (in a low tone to Reginald) it were in those of our ally."

"Before I depart," said Reginald, "I must inform your Holiness that I have established a communication with Giacomo Colonna, who has retired to Palestrine. In the vaults beneath the Temple of Fortune, the meetings are held, which will sooner or later restore Rome to its rightful sovereign. Robert of Naples, your Holiness's senator,

is passionately devoted to astrology, and Giacomo has an acquaintance who will deal out fortune with a ready hand : our man of science is also a man of sense, and has a hand, as well as a head, open to conviction. A good word and an open purse may do much. Use both, holy sire ! Colonna knows the fickleness of the Romans, and looks forward with confidence to eventual success ; but we must be energetic, sire ! for the protracted residence of an Emperor may render the party against a non-resident Pope too formidable to be put down. The two great requisites to maintain your authority are valour, and the means to reward it : it will be necessary to be largely liberal ;—a measure I would not counsel, but for necessity. What think you, Count de Cominges ?”

“ Marcus Antonius,” replied that learned counsellor, “ read the will of Cæsar to the people of Rome, and the gifts and legacies of Julius placed Octavius on the throne.”

“ Well remembered, Count,” interrupted John ; “ take this to our cardinal secretary.”

When De Cominges had departed, the Pope

addressed our hero :—" Whom did you consult as to your Italian arrangements?"

" Our fair ally, sir : she will remain here, and is much more capable of counselling than her dog-matical parent. Trust to her and Petrarch."

" She loves ornaments, I think?"

" To her heart, sire."

" Take this," said John, presenting a superb chain of emeralds, with a cross of diamonds: " stay, I will myself enfold it." The direction was, " To the fair ally, and faithful friend of J."

Reginald was surprised at the gallantry displayed by John, and with due salutations left the presence to make preparations for departure: during this the Bishop of Arras arrived with Petrarch. Hawkwood was ordered not to allow any one to enter the apartment. Their debate was interrupted by a loud altercation. " What is the matter, Hawkwood?" said De Vavasour.

" A young cavalier declares he will force his way," answered the worthy squire.

" Cut him down," cried Reginald.

" Let him, if he dares," answered a well-known

voice ; and in rushed the handsomest youth that ever graced the walls of Avignon. He was dressed in black, after the Spanish fashion ; and his hat, looped with brilliants, was surmounted by a plume of white feathers. “ Young sir,” said Reginald, smiling, “ your appearance is captivating : all that your dress wants I am authorised to give, for I suppose you to be the person expected by His Holiness. Look at this.” The eyes of the youth sparkled with joy, on beholding the splendid gift : Reginald placed the chain around his neck, and the cross hung upon a beating heart.

Reginald retired with the Spaniard to his private apartment. “ I did not expect to meet Petrarch here,” exclaimed the stranger : “ I do not mind Pierre Roger : he has masqueraded it, many a time and oft, even here in our poor city of Avignon. But Petrarch is a modest man, and will think me a very improper person.”

“ Do you think he has recognized you ? I should think the brown color and mustachios were sufficient disguise, especially with these false ringlets.

I will announce to my friends that it was the Pope's wish you should know our secrets."

"Your hospitality," said the youth, "does not overwhelm me: would it not be kind, would it not be polite,—to offer an apartment in your house to a stranger?"

"I trust," said Reginald aloud, "that Don Alphonso will command every thing which this house can afford. Hawkwood, see to his Excellency's comforts." He then left the chamber, and stated that Don Alphonso had been selected by the Pope for beauty as well as talents: "for it may be necessary," added he, "to assume female apparel, for which no one is more qualified than our new associate. See, Petrarch, how high this youth stands in his Holiness's estimation: look at his own hand; and we know it is not every day that John gives such presents."

Reginald then hastened to seek the handsome stranger. "In truth," said he, "you are a most bewitching youth."

"Ay, Sir Reginald, give his black Eminence his due, and all poor sinners theirs,—I think I

could win half a dozen hearts this evening, in this wicked town: and, by the memory of the great Alphonso, who at Muradat killed, wounded, or eat two hundred thousand Moors,—I would kill or wound as many female hearts as I could count minutes, and I would commence with no other person than our coy, pious prude, Madame Laura.”

“Come, my lovely conqueror, we must adjourn to the council-chamber, and at present think of Popes and Romans, Emperors and Kings.”

When the mock Alphonso had taken his seat, Petrarch commenced:—“The Cardinal Colonna is decided in his support of our holy Father.”

“And my protector,” said the bishop, “the Cardinal Pierre de Mortimer, is for strong measures. The Cardinal de Cominges,” touching the youth under the table as he spoke, “will also go with us.” Alphonso whispered, “I find you are clever enough to wear a Cardinal’s hat; a tiara may become you: mind, I say, discretion!”

“Who will essay the Cardinal Blanc?” inquired Petrarch: “he is one of our ablest men.”

“Leave him to me,” replied the bishop.

Having discussed the necessary topics relative to Italian affairs, the bishop said, "I have orders, Sir Reginald, to accompany you to Paris."

The Spaniard started up. "To Paris?"

"Yes, young sir," answered Pierre; "I, though a humble churchman, am selected to give advice to a warrior and statesman; and I thank those who chose me. Know you who they were?"

The youth looked confused; Reginald remarked to the bishop:—"It will not suit your excellency to ride at a soldier's pace: you may overtake me at Roussillon, where I shall halt for a short time."

"On the third day," answered the prelate, "I will be there." He, however, was not the only person determined to be there on a given day.

When the party broke up, Don Alphonso gave orders to his page in waiting, and was soon after joined by Reginald.

"Why did you permit another," said the stranger, "to make your departure known to me? I, who ought to be the first person in your thoughts, and to whom all others should be sacrificed."

“ You speak somewhat too loftily, my young Spaniard; you perhaps, who care not for papal or regal power, may consider that Reginald is equally indifferent about the protection of, or obedience to sovereign rights; but when my king calls, think you I would waste an hour in useless delay?”

“ I should not call it wasted: but I see every one is preferred to the poor damsel who for you has made every sacrifice. You treat Petrarch, nay, the bishop, with confidence; and leave me, whom you pretend to dote upon, to learn your movements from common rumour. Leave me, De Vavasour! you are unworthy of my love.”

“ I wished to spare you the pain of parting: my absence will probably be short, and why should an affectionate heart be unnecessarily agitated?”

“ You know me not: I can bear greater evils than that of temporary separation, if it be for your good.”

“ It is my duty to a dying monarch, my benefactor, which calls me from Avignon.”

“ Your first duty is to me,” rejoined Cecile,

quite thrown off her guard : “ he who can place a king above a woman, deserves a woman’s scorn. Begone, false knight !”

The word *false* had never before struck upon the ear of Reginald ; the bitter sound vibrated through his brain ; and even Hawkwood, who had never before known fear, trembled as he passed.

“ At what hour to horse, my lord ?” said the squire.

“ Now !” was the reply ; and Reginald, with Herculean force, dashed back the oaken door that closed his suite of apartments.

CHAP. XXXV.

THE JOURNEY.

CÉCILE repented the hastiness of her conduct : at day-break she endeavoured to find Hawkwood, or a confidential page. No one appeared. " He sleeps," thought she, " and I will not disturb him." At the hour of nine, the major-domo arrived, to announce the morning repast. The guest took a seat, but no Reginald appeared to give the morning salutation. Wrapping herself in a large mantle, Cecile bent her way to the garden gate.

Meanwhile, Reginald had galloped towards the Château d'Albon. In a conference with the Dauphin, his Highness observed, that a question might arise, whether the Salique law prohibited the descendants of females from enjoying the throne : perhaps the Dauphin looked to the claim of his son, Humbert, when he thus spoke.

Instead of halting at Roussillon, as the bishop

expected, Reginald, after exchanging affectionate inquiries with Aurélie, desired to speak to Agenor alone. “It would be highly advantageous to you, my dear friend,” said he, “to follow me to Paris. The king would, at the request of Robert d’Artois, grant to you the title of Roussillon, as the husband of the heiress of that house; and make you a peer of France, in place of the deceased Count.”

“If Aurélie will assent to my departure,” replied Agenor, “I will follow with the Bishop of Arras.”

Reginald again took horse, and was far on his road, when the bishop arrived at Roussillon. At Vienne he halted one day to enjoy the pleasures of friendship, and related to the Primate his future plans.

“In your plans,” answered the Primate, “I will cordially join. After the conduct of the Emperor towards myself at the court of Rome, and the insult which I saw offered to that excellent old man, I have broken off all connexion with Louis, and am ready to join force of arm to power of mind, and

proceed on a crusade to Rome. His Holiness owes you much, and has, I trust, rewarded your services with that liberality which your zeal demands."

"Petrarch has more need of his liberality," answered De Vavasour.

"We all have our wants, my son," replied the Primate; "and though the high-minded may disregard that sordid, but useful trash,—gold, their friends must think for them. The Principality of Vienne is crumbling away for want of such metal: take you advantage of my experience."

"I will, my friend, confess," rejoined Reginald, "that the Pope has neither repaid the past, nor does he provide for the present expenses of my troops, employed for his service in Italy."

"This is not the way for John to regain his papal power: I shall advise the cardinal secretary to remonstrate."

"Let not my name appear; for though my expenses have made me poor, yet my poverty has increased, instead of diminishing, my pride."

"We will now talk of our own affairs. You

know that our late officer, Hermann, married Claudine, as some reparation for his want of duty to his Prince. Lorenzo is freed from that unworthy connexion, and I wish him to be your companion."

Reginald now hastened to the *Maison de Rousigné*. After mutual inquiries, Lorenzo said, in reply to a question as to the manner in which he passed his time,—“ Why, I have ceased to think of that treacherous brunette, who, I believe, found *Le Fou* a more agreeable companion than his master. *Parbleu!* we were heartily tired of each other."

“ I suppose,” observed Reginald, “ you have found metal more attractive?”

“ To be sure; there is a lovely specimen of Breton flesh and blood, imported by an old wine-dealer of *St. Colombe*. *Calderos* turned his unholy eyes upon her; but my deputy-governor, *Hubert*, bade me try my luck. The Breton, however, is too avaricious for me."

“ I have no money to lend,” replied Reginald; “ nor would the Prince, or your mother, I think,

advance any for so honest and praiseworthy a purpose : but come with me to Paris as my secretary, and personal knight attendant ; the King will pay your expenses, and you will have enough to buy the favors of the willing beauties of Paris, and leave the Colombian worshipper of Plutus to wine-les and Spanish integrity, of which old Calderos is a happy specimen : no one can accuse him of being ‘ *Integer vitæ scelerisque purus.*’ ”

The offer was accepted, and they speedily left Vienne, and making a short halt at the archiepiscopal palace of Lyons, pursued their route with rapidity.

On the night of the arrival of the bishop of Arras at Roussillon, an unexpected noise was heard in the court-yard, and Mademoiselle de Cominges was announced. Aurélie received her politely, but coldly : not a word was said relative to Reginald ; and when Cecile appeared at the morning repast, she learned that the bishop and Count Agenor had left the castle. Mademoiselle apologized for the shortness of her visit, pleaded urgent business, and proceeded to Vienne.

CHAP. XXXVI.

CHARLES OF FRANCE.

ON Reginald's arrival in Paris, he hastened to the palace of Robert d'Artois, and accompanied him to the Château de Vincennes, where he was admitted to the royal presence. "Our earthly course," said the king, "is hastening to an end, and it is necessary to make arrangements for the future peace and welfare of our dominions. We owe to you, De Vavasour, much gratitude for your services; and we have to present you with additional grants of land, for which, as enrolled in our chancery, it is admitted that due consideration has been given. Your zeal for the restoration of our friend and holy Father deserves great applause, and we look to a continuation of such exertions, as your known talents and valour give us full promise of success.—We are aware of your affection for the royal family of England, but we

trust you will never desert the cause of France. We hear that young Edward, our nephew, possesses talent and spirit: we wish you to state our determination to obey the Salique law. If, therefore, the queen produces a female child, I name Philippe de Valois rightful heir to the throne; and, in the mean while, will appoint him regent of France."

"While your royal approbation of the Salique law is thus announced," said Robert, "I must consider that, on the same principles, your Highness must admit my claims to the Comté d'Artois to be indubitable."

"I admit, Count Robert," replied the king, "that, by right descent and just ordination, you are heir to those vast possessions; but the custom of that country, upon which the peers have already decided, deprived you of your rights; and, in order to recompense you for the loss, Beaumont le Roger was made a Comté-Pairie."

"True, sire," returned the Prince, "but your Highness admits my natural right?"

"Certainly; had your predecessors established

those rights in their heirs-male, the Countess Maude could never have triumphed over you. I will even go further, and say, that the peers came to a very wrong decision ; for it was a fair opportunity to break through, and overturn, a bad and injudicious custom, and one decidedly prejudicial to the best interests of the nation, which should always be served by the direct heirs-male of a noble family, in whom the power to rule should be legally vested. On the same principle that placed my brother Philip on the throne, to the exclusion of Jane, Queen of Navarre ; and through which I myself succeeded to the crown, to the prejudice of my cousins Jeanne, Marguerite, and Isabelle:---so shall Philippe of Valois hold the reins of government, in preference to any female blood springing from my veins.”

“ His Holiness the Pope,” said Reginald, “ approves of your royal intentions : the Primate of Vienne, as well as the Archbishop of Lyons, are of the same opinion. The learned Bishop of Arras is on his way to Paris, and his knowledge and eloquence will well forward the cause of Philippe.”

“ Of the Duke of Bourbon,” answered Charles, “ I am assured : my creation of that Comté into a Duché-Pairie, in favor of a grandson of St. Louis, will not only insure peace to the nation ; but I die in the conviction that, from that illustrious house, heroes will arise, to the honor and dignity of the crown, and to the happiness of the people.”

At a subsequent presentation, Count Agenor did homage for the title of Roussillon and Peer, and the Bishop of Arras had a long consultation with the king. After an illness of thirty-seven days, Charles breathed his last in his thirty-fifth year : the shortness of his reign, which was only of seven years’ duration, prevented him from carrying into effect the plans he had formed for the happiness of his people ; but the wisdom of his conduct had procured them peace. He was the youngest of the three sons of Philippe le Bel, and was esteemed the handsomest man in France : he absented himself from his brother Philippe’s coronation at Rheims, as it was supposed, from family differences. Philippe had shown his good sense in his

conduct towards his Queen, who was the elder sister of the wife of Charles. Charles had repudiated his wife, who, after bearing him two children, was found guilty of adultery: not wishing to adopt the cruel conduct of his elder brother, who had ordered his wife to be strangled for the same crime—he set his marriage aside on pretext of proximity of kin: this was unnecessary after her public condemnation, and, if a just pretext, would have also implicated her elder sister's marriage. On the contrary, King Philippe had received his wife with great joy after her public acquittal; and it is possible this was the cause of Charles's absence from his coronation: but peace to his manes! Charles IV. was a good king.

CHAP. XXXVII.

FRIENDSHIP.

As soon as the funeral of the deceased monarch was performed, Philippe de Valois commanded the attendance of Reginald.

“The late king,” said he, “selected you as the bearer of his wishes to his vassal, Edward of England: there, Marquis de Montserrent, is your commission; you must depart forthwith.”

The few hours of delay were passed in conversation with the Bishop of Arras, while Agenor prepared a letter for his sister.

“You are not aware, my friend,” said the bishop, “of the contents of that packet which you delivered from John to the king, and which, if I mistake not, hastened your journey to England. Did his Holiness, on parting, present you with any gift, or use any particular words?”

“ Yes,” answered Reginald; “ but he commanded strict silence, until the moment arrived when he gave me liberty to speak.”

“ If the circumstance of his Holiness’s present communication,” rejoined the bishop, “ were known to a person who might pass for Alphonso’s sister, and whom I saw, before my departure from Rousillon, in a riding dress, you would have been closely questioned: from her appearance, I thought something had occurred, to prove that the calmest seas are subject to internal commotion: perhaps the seas we speak of are not calm?”

“ Not always, I believe; but we have no time to talk of such folly: let us to business:—you know Earl Mortimer?”

“ Yes, the antiquated favorite who governs the governor of the young king;—you understand me. Why, Reginald, you seem more dead than alive. What is the matter?—where is your usual fire?—where your quickness of apprehension?—where the display of talent that has made you what you are? If you are unhappy, confide in

me : I am experienced in the ways of the world, and on every subject but one capable of giving a correct opinion."

" Perhaps the cause of my distractedness is owing to that very individual subject."

" Well, even on this vulnerable point, I will essay to be reasonable, just, and unbiassed."

" The fair ally of the Pope has insulted me : I am not of a temper to submit to any human being. I am about to meet one with whom my destiny is considered to be allied : my affections are weakened by the tyranny with which I been treated, but are not destroyed. I am like a vessel in a storm, near a dangerous coast ; and the power which should direct the vessel is incapable of forming a correct decision : be you the pilot."

" If you have a favorable pretext for breaking off this unwise connexion, avail yourself of it."

" Pretexts may be easily found, but ——"

" But what ?—a fine woman, with a fine territory, is *not* every day to be found."

" If they can be honorably attained, it is well.

my Lord Bishop! but I fear you are too worldly-minded to give me counsel."

"You wish for advice, and will not take it of the church."

The ironical tone in which this was spoken nettled Reginald, and he replied hastily, "Were it from the Primate, I would; but from ——"

"Prince Reginald," interrupted Pierre Roger, "I am still your friend; do not make me your foe!"

"Think you, my Lord of Arras, I prize your friendship, or fear your enmity?"

"Come, my friend!" said Agenor, who had heard the last two sentences; "my brother! do not let the seeds of discord be sown amongst us; hitherto we have lived happily."

"And may still live so," replied the prelate, "if the Marquis can discriminate which of his friends is likely to be the most useful. Let us speak of Earl Mortimer. He can be gained to the cause of Philippe, and Robert d'Artois will provide the means: Edward is in the moon of uxoriousness: never did the sun shine more brightly on the house of Valois."

At this moment a pursuivant entered with despatches from the Pope, and letters, of which we shall speak hereafter. The Bishop hastily perused a short note written to himself.

“ I must to the Regent,” said he: “ think not, De Vavasour, of what has passed. Be expeditious, be fortunate !”

When the bishop had departed, Agenor entrusted a packet for the Countess Matilde to the care of his friend, and, embracing him, wished him complete success.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

ISABEL OF FRANCE.

A strong breeze bore Reginald tempestuously from Havre to Southampton. He felt a variety of sensations on returning to the land which, though not that of his birth, had adopted him for a son. He had left in it friends who loved and esteemed him; but who now, from the different

circumstances in which he stood, might consider him almost as an enemy come to treat in favor of foreign influence. For the present, he was determined to appear only as a traveller, and his English attendants prevented any unnecessary delay. On arriving in London, his first care was to adjust his dress, and he then hastened to pay his respects to Queen Isabel, who, whatever her failings or errors might have been towards others, had to him been a second mother. Having presented himself in the guard-chamber, he delivered his signet, and was immediately admitted. Reginald knelt, and kissed the hand of the still handsome Princess: she raised, and embraced him. Isabel's eyes sparkled with pleasure, on beholding the youth, who had so long been the object of her care and favor, appear in the vigour of early manhood.

“ You are no longer my pretty page, Reginald,” exclaimed she, “ but my handsome knight. What unlooked-for circumstance brings you here to our city of London ?”

“ I am sent upon an embassy to you, gracious

Madame," replied he, "and to his Highness King Edward, your son."

"My son will soon add the crown of France to that of England," rejoined Isabel. "Heaven be praised, he does not resemble his weak, misguided father."

"At present, Madame, the throne of France is not open to any claim," said our hero.

"Is not my brother Charles dead, and am I not next of kin?" was the reply.

"The French nation indulge a hope of a successor in the direct male line, the Queen being enceinte."

"But there must be a regent if there be an infant, and Queens have filled that step to the throne."

"Your brother, King Charles, of good memory, declared, in my presence, that, in failure of issue male, he named Philippe de Valois as successor to the throne, and in the interim nominated him regent. The question now is, whether the late king's will is to be obeyed or violated; and I am sent by that king's order, confirmed by

Philippe, to demand King Edward's acquiescence."

"It is a question of great difficulty. By acknowledging Philippe as regent, we shall acknowledge, indirectly, his claim to the crown, to obtain which I am prepared to recommend the strongest efforts. But we will now talk upon more agreeable subjects. What beauties have you seen in your travels? How did you pass your time in the gay court of Avignon? How did you leave my knight of Montleans? How many fair dames have been captivated by that noble air?"

Reginald related such circumstances as he thought would amuse the Queen, and certainly did not forget the *Cour d'Amour*.

"Go, Reginald," said Isabel, "and visit the Earl of March: he is quick to take offence, and, if you slight him, may be dangerous. Desire him to attend me when it suits his convenience. I will send a courier to my son, who is embosomed in matrimonial bliss at Windsor, whither he has retired from the bustle of public affairs. He will, I am sure, receive you in the course of to-morrow ;

and you will be invited for our family-meeting on St. Edward's day, on which occasion we shall all appear in gayer colours than suit a mourning sister. Come to me this evening at the hour of supper; by that time I shall have my son Edward's answer."

From the Queen's apartments, Reginald went directly to those of Mortimer, by whom he was coldly but civilly received.

Having delivered the letter of Robert d'Artois, in which the Count stated his anxiety to maintain King Charles's will: and declared that Philippe was bound in the strongest wishes for Queen Isabel's welfare, and in the Earl of March's particular weal:—the letter concluded, by pressing upon the Earl the urgent necessity of the case, and the advantage to be derived from his prompt and prudent advice.

It is not necessary to enumerate all the promises made on the part of Philippe. Any one who has the slightest knowledge of those mysterious means whereby the affairs of courts were directed in former days, must know full well of what composi-

tion the oil is which makes the wheels within wheels to work. Reginald added, that he was commissioned to deliver a valuable packet, but it was too weighty for his haste: his domestics had it in charge with his heavy baggage. Mortimer assured him of his willingness to acquiesce in the proposals now made, and departed to attend Queen Isabel, who handed to him for perusal the despatch intended for Windsor. He found it contained advice to dissolve the council of twelve, and claim the regency of France.

“ It would be impolitic and unwise, Madame, to send such a letter. There are spies around us; and, were the contents to transpire, the Earl of Lancaster would impeach me forthwith as the projector. The Earl of Kent, the uncle of Edward, is also much to be dreaded: if the King takes one step towards unrestrained power, your authority will soon fall to the ground. Be assured, Madame, that it is better merely to inform the King, that your former page, De Vavasour, is arrived with a message of some importance, which he is commanded to deliver in person.”

This plan was accordingly put in execution; and Mortimer, in a cool, crafty manner, proceeded cautiously to tread over slippery ground: however, he succeeded in convincing the Queen that, as they had before required the assistance of Charles against one Edward, so might they hereafter require the aid of Philippe against another of the same name and kin, though of a totally opposite nature. Early in the evening, Mortimer retired to his political speculations and business, and Reginald arrived, according to the Queen's orders. The messenger had brought the King's answer, appointing an early hour, on the following day, for receiving the Queen's page.

CHAP. XXXIX.

EDWARD OF ENGLAND.

REGINALD sent Hawkwood forward to prepare an apartment, in order that at his arrival he might arrange his dress so as to appear worthy of the situation he held, as well as of entering the company of royalty. On arriving with Lorenzo at the main gate of the castle of Windsor, Reginald found a cavalier fully armed, attended by a strong guard, ready to receive him with the customary honors. Reginald reined in his horse, and begged Lorenzo to explain that he was unworthy of the honor, being simply a knight and traveller. The officer commanding rode up, and said :—" We have the King's orders so to receive Sir Reginald de Vavasour : " the front line then wheeled up on its left. Reginald and Lorenzo were next ; the second line closed, and they moved on : when they entered the inte-

rior court, the soldiers filed off, and drew up in line, while Reginald dismounted, and, having thanked the officer for his attention, followed a page, who conducted him through the arched corridor which surrounded the small interior garden. Having ascended a narrow private staircase, Reginald passed along a suite of apartments destined for domestic purposes, and entered the anti-chamber to the King's closet.

His name being announced, the door was opened, and he hastened to kneel, but was prevented, and embraced by Edward.

“ By St. George of England, Reginald, you are an honor to France, as well as to this our native country: our court cannot boast so handsome a cavalier. Your military labors have not injured the beauty of your face, while they have added to the dignity of your person: we long ourselves to tread the field of war; but, Reginald, I am married, and to such a paragon of beauty as man never looked on. I will present you forthwith:—Stay, stay, possibly my Philippa is not sufficiently apparelled to receive so handsome an ambassador.”

“ Were the Queen ready, sire, to receive the homage of her servant, it would be an insult to appear as I am ; but your officer of the guard pressed me hither in this *deshabille*.”

“ It is a very handsome riding dress, of good Parisian shape, and would not disgrace you or your court ; for I suppose you are now *entièrement François*. But Philippa is not the only female attraction here : we have under our care a haughty young Fleming, who is devoted to dress, ornaments, and rank : she is a walking piece of *heraldry* ; and, by the honor of our kingdom, I think her haughtiness worth subduing, and you are the hero of romance fitted for the encounter. However, you are right, Reginald, in recollecting the decorum which a soldier is too apt to forget : but I was so anxious to be the first to see and welcome you, that I made my arrangements accordingly ; and to prevent the possibility of your old acquaintance in our establishment superseding my pleasure, they are now drawn up near the grand staircase : but, my friend, you were ever fond of dress.”

“ Yes, sire ; and my residence in the family of

the Prince Primate of Vienne, and at the court of Rome, has not lessened that fondness."

"I suppose, however, that on the eve of the battle of Saintes, you thought more of iron than velvet?"

"Naturally, sire!"

"The toilette was forgotten on the morning when you charged those villains, whom the mistaken policy of the ministers of my unfortunate father supported. Do not blush, my friend, at a young aspirant's praise: I know you ceased to fight against the subjects of Guienne, when the pernicious contract against virtue, society, and law was broken and destroyed. Yours was a gallant and well-executed enterprise; and I read, with the feelings of friendship, the account given by the Maréchal's own hand of your heroic conduct: it was sent by Robert d'Artois to my queen mother. Well, Reginald, we have a great deal to hear; and, as it is near our dinner hour, (for when alone we are of early habits,) you may as well prepare at once for conquest: for if you do not conquer our young bird of Juno, then Edward of England forswears

prophecy. We will meet you here, and ourself present you."

Our readers are sufficiently acquainted with De Vavasour, to be assured he would not neglect such an opportunity ; and we hope a sufficient interest has been excited, to make them wish that his *début* may be successful. Lorenzo was in attendance ; but hearing that Reginald was invited to the royal table, he said : " Well, Hawkwood, you mentioned a place prepared for me at that of the household ; and unless they are as dull as Englishmen generally, (I beg your pardon, Hawkwood ; no offence to you !) it will go hard if I do not contrive to be as happy as my noble friend the ambassador. The Lord preserve me from a courtly company !"

CHAP. XL.

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT, QUEEN OF ENGLAND.

IN compliment to the deceased King Charles, the ambassador wore black velvet; but, as was the custom in those days, his rich mantle was superbly embroidered in gold and jewels. His chest and shoulders were covered with his various chains, orders, and medallions; his cap was coroneted, and his richly-hilted sword, of which we have already spoken, hung suspended from a massive chain, studded with turquoises.

On re-entering the closet, Edward joined him. "By our patron," said the royal youth, "if you had wished to conquer our haughty Fleming, you could not have chosen better means: you look like a Prince of France."

"But I am a subject of Guienne."

"We will not talk upon business to-day; no, nor to-morrow, for it is our saint's day. This day

belongs to the tutelary saint of Ireland ; and, as lord of that country, we will honor St. Patrick, and his purgatory, in a bumper of vin de Bordeaux. I trust Philippa is now attired ; and I actually burn with impatience to present you to our imperious ward, who scoffs at the nobles of our court, and calls them vulgar Saxons."

Conducted by the same page, the king entered, by a private door, the hall of reception.

" We are ready first, Reginald," continued he ; " that is right ; the ladies should never wait for true knights. I will seek Philippa."

Reginald gazed with surprise, from a deep bay-window, at the magnificent scene that lay stretched before him : the hanging wilderness, the green verdure of the park and forests, the lofty though leafless trees, the winding Thames ;—and fancy enriched the prospect with the proud towers of London, which the smoke, occasioned by a strong easterly wind, concealed. He compared in his mind the views from the royal residences in France, and was satisfied that nothing, there, was comparable to this.

Edward entered with Philippa, and pointed to the knight, who seemed wrapped in contemplation. They made their remarks in a subdued tone, and at last Edward said, "Sir Reginald, the Queen."

Reginald sprung from his position, knelt, and saluted the extended hand of royalty. "Do not rise," exclaimed the king; "you shall be Philippa's knight." Then, taking his sheathed sword, Edward presented it, and the Queen slightly touched the shoulder of the much-honored youth. Near her Highness there stood a young damsel, contemplating the scene. As he rose, Edward said, "Were you dreaming, just now, of love or war?"

"Neither," replied De Vavasour, "upon the faith of a knight; though perhaps one at least ought to have occupied me, after the splendid description given by your Highness: but, to tell the truth, I had forgotten the beauties of Windsor, and was lost in astonishment at the splendor of the view."

"That is a compliment to me," cried Edward;

“ but here is one that better deserves notice and compliment.”

Reginald was amazed at the superior charms he beheld in Queen Philippa, but did not dare to give utterance to his feelings.

“ This, Philippa,” continued Edward, “ is the friend, companion, playmate, and school-fellow of my youth,—boyhood I should say, for he is my senior; but, fierce and untractable as he was, he always treated me with kind frankness; and though himself a favorite of the late king, never displayed towards my brother or myself aught but the most affectionate disposition. And now, Reginald, I would present you to this young scion of the house of Hainault, if I knew your proper designation.”

“ Any designation,” answered our knight, “ your Highness may think fit to give, must honor me.”

“ By St. George, you do not want for decorations; so, Countess Matilde, acknowledge this knight as Sir Reginald de Vavasour, until it please him to leave his incognito.”

“Come, my fair cousin,” said Philippa, “receive the salute of the friend of my husband.”

“Come, my pretty maid of Flanders,” cried the King, “do not refuse a handsome knight, a defender of the sex, and with more gold on his shoulders than Edward has in his treasury.”

Reginald saluted the half-willing, half-reluctant Matilde; and, to cover her confusion, Philippa made inquiries concerning the Countess Aurélie. “I understand,” added the Queen, “she is most amiable as well as most beautiful.”

“She is esteemed highly at Avignon,” answered Reginald: “but in the court of Windsor, she would be obscured by the presence of the most beautiful of women.”

“Sir Reginald,” rejoined the Queen, “you are, I see, a complete courtier.”

“On the faith of a true knight,” returned De Vavasour, “and one who has visited various parts of France, I never yet saw the equal of the illustrious personage who has this day conferred upon me a distinction, which I feel myself totally unworthy to receive.”

“Come, Sir Modesty,” exclaimed the royal Edward, “the lord chamberlain of the household attends us.”

The King led Philippa, and Matilde accepted the proffered hand of Reginald. As they passed the anti-chamber, the attendants recognised De Vavasour, and hastened to kiss the hand of one whom they all loved.

When the attendants retired, Edward commenced thus:—“In order to claim some right to learn your adventures, I will briefly relate mine; and will begin with my mother. When Robert d’Artois was made acquainted with the secret council of King Charles, he came in the night to my mother’s apartment, and gave information of the intention to arrest her, myself, and Lord Mortimer, and to deliver us into the hands of the English ministers. He advised our appeal to the Princes of Hainault. At Hainault I saw the lovely Philippa; and though we were both so young, we decided that we could be happy together, and my mother declared she was better suited to be my wife than her eldest sister, as be-

ing more conversant with society, and more fascinating.

“ On our landing, Prince Henry of Lancaster joined us, with other noblemen, in Suffolk. Of subsequent affairs we need not speak, except of that period when it was considered that we were old enough to be married ; and we are certainly both wise enough to think ourselves very happy. Now, Reginald, I may claim your history.”

This of course was complied with ; and having heard his story, Edward said :—“ Young as you are, Reginald, you have had an adventurous life, and could doubtless tell us many amusing incidents ; but we will not press for confessions.”

After dinner, the King proposed showing the internal arrangements of the castle, and particularly an armoury which he was forming. Philippa retired at an early hour, followed by Matilde ; and Edward, having discoursed for a short time with Reginald, wished him a good night’s repose. When he reached his apartment, the knight called for French wine, and, with Lorenzo, determined to pass two or three hours over a blazing hearth.

“ I am commanded,” said he to his friend, “ to invite you to dinner to-morrow ; and, at the same time, the Queen desired me to apologize for not noticing you sooner, but was unaware of your being my companion.”

“ I could not expect to be admitted into the private society of royalty,” was the reply ; “ indeed, I have been much more at my ease with the household :—but may I ask your opinion of the noble sister of our friend Agenor ?”

“ My opinion, Lorenzo, is freely at your service. The Countess Matilde has regal pretensions in her air ; has a smooth clear skin, regular features, hazel eyes, and black hair, with a tinge of gold when viewed in the light : she is of a fine tall figure, considering her youth ; and, were Queen Philippa not present, must command universal attention. Perhaps it is that the Queen is more to my particular taste, and that her manners are more captivating ; but I certainly consider it impossible for any one to appear to advantage in her presence.”

“ And if it be not impertinent to ask, does your

Excellency think that the wishes of the family of Montleans will be fulfilled?"

"I have not thought about the wishes of the family of Montleans, or any other family: I have been so charmed with the friendly reception of the King, and the amiable condescension of the Queen, that my ideas have floated about in a sea of delight, and I have almost wished to find myself fixed for life upon some of the Britannie cliffs."

"Marquis of Montserrent and Count of Montauban, you must not desert France, unless France desert you."

"Fear not, friend Lorenzo: Philippe must treat me in a very different manner from that in which he now does, to make me forget what I owe to King Charles and Robert d'Artois."

CHAP. XLI.

EDWARD THE MARTYR.

AFTER attending morning service at the royal chapel, the King proposed an excursion into the forest. The day was tolerably serene for the month of March; and the climate of England being similar to that of her native land, Philippa was not afraid to encounter the piercing blast of early spring. She took the precaution, however, to wrap herself in a richly-trimmed mantle of purple velvet, lined with costly furs; and, mounted on a grey palfrey, with rich furniture of the same material as the robe, appeared to her subjects a model of regal beauty. As Reginald assisted Matilde to mount her prancing Arab, she said, “ You have not delivered to me the letter of my brother, which I am most anxious to receive.”

“ Fair Countess,” answered the knight, “ I have not had an opportunity: it does not become a true

knight to assault the sanctity of a lady's chamber ; and, until it pleaseth her to whom I offer my homage to order my attendance, I must with patience bear the pain of absence, and not complain that the light of the sun is hidden from my eyes."

"Is that the French or the Italian mode of paying court to a young lady? Think you, Sir Reginald, I am so weak as to imagine you feel one iota of what you express? Inquire this evening for the apartment of my grand-aunt and gouvernante, la Baronne d'Arnheim. She wishes to see you, but is confined to her chamber by indisposition."

As they rode through the park, the improvements now making under the immediate direction of the King excited attention, and drew forth just admiration. Their course was directed towards a secluded spot in the forest, where, surrounded by a wilderness of thicket, stood a rudely-carved stone cross, which had been originally erected near Corfe Castle, on the spot where Edward, king of the West Saxons, had been murdered. This cross had been removed from its original site, to this

wild and appropriate place by King Edward I. It had, in former days, been a favorite haunt of Edward and his young companion. Philippa having dismounted, the King forced his way through the entangled underwood, and the party arrived at the spot, from whence there was a view of the royal castle on one side, and the extensive forest on the other. Matilde expressed herself charmed with the noble prospect, and declared, that she had never seen any thing so worthy of a King as the royal residence of Windsor. "Its position," observed she, "is as secure from attack as it is dignified and overawing."

"Think you, Reginald," said Edward, "our old acquaintance Ethelred still inhabits these woods?"

"If," replied De Vavasour, "it please the Queen of beauty to permit so uncouth a being to approach her presence, I will summon him."

"Philippa, half curious and half alarmed, assented. At the base of the cross there was a brass plate with large mystic Saxon characters: on this Reginald struck, and the sound of a loud and

distant bell echoed in answer. He repeated his signal, and was again replied to.

“ He comes, Madam,” exclaimed Reginald :—
“ he is here !”

All eyes were directed to a thick coppice of holly-wood and juniper ; from the centre of which appeared an immense head, with black streaming locks, and curling beard and mustachios. Any person who has seen the figures of Gog and Magog, may form a tolerably just idea of the gigantic figure which, supported by a massive club, seemed to arise perpendicularly out of the earth. Over his shoulders there hung, on one side, a wolf’s head and paws ; and his Herculean form, in its natural shape and weather-beaten colour, was displayed in primeval nudity, excepting where the skins of the same animal encircled his waist ; thereby preventing an outrage upon modesty. Philippa seized the arm of her husband, while Matilde clung for protection to Reginald. “ Be not afraid, Ethelred,” said Edward ; “ we are all friends !”

“ Great Prince of Windsor !” replied the un-

couth figure ; “ descendant from a line of Kings !—name your commands.”

“ Here is my wife :—do homage, Saxon, at the shrine of beauty ! Say, will her life be as happy as her merits deserve ?”

“ She will enjoy long life and happiness, and be the honored mother of as many children as there are months in the year.”

“ Briefly relate your history, that the Queen may judge how far you may be credited.”

“ No one ever yet doubted Ethelred.—The founder of our family was the son of Ethelred, whose mother caused the death of Edward, the youthful king of the West Saxons, who received the title of Martyr, in consequence of the numerous miracles performed at his tomb. The wife of Ethelred having discovered the inconstancy of her husband, ordered the mother to be burnt for witchcraft, and the child to be sold to the Irish as a slave. This was then a common practice, and infants were sold with as little compunction as cattle ; but in the miserable reign of Ethelred, a law was enacted to prevent such cruelty. The son

of this slave fought under Harold at the battle of Hastings, and was made prisoner; but his wounds being too numerous and severe for him to be considered useful as a serf, he received his liberty, and established himself in the county of Dorset. Here he became acquainted with an Egyptian fortune-teller: she was descended from Dositheus, the magician of Samaria, who had admitted among his followers a woman, whom he called the Moon; and who accidentally gave birth to the female from whom I now claim antiquity of Egyptian origin. These points may appear to you, ladies, of little consequence; but nothing is so material as to establish, on undeniable grounds, the origin of the mysterious power which I inherit. Their son, Ethelred, was instructed in the study of the stars, and the laws of nature. At an early age he became skilled in the art of prescience, and accompanied his mother, who was called Idulkilla the sorceress, into her native land. Here his mind was enlarged by the study of the Chaldæan and Coptic languages, and he became versed in hieroglyphics. Having married an Armenian, he re-

turned to his own country, where his profession secured him a sufficient provision. Ethelred was enabled to support all those wanderers of Asia, whose garb gave them great importance; but he, who reigned over them, only wore the same covering as you see on his descendant. At his death, he prophesied that his family would never be extinct, provided one of its members resided near this cross: when your grandfather, of illustrious memory, removed this relic, he allowed my father to establish himself near it; but my parents dying, have left me to close the unfortunate race of Ethelred the Saxon."

"It is a pity so noble a line should be extinct," remarked Edward: "here is a travelled knight: by the faith of a King, he could well provide you a help-mate."

"If he will promise so to do," replied the Saxon, "I can reward him."

"My endeavours, good Ethelred," said De Vavasour, "shall not be wanting; and, ere long, I shall visit the Neapolitan territories, where King Robert protects all the inspired votaries of augury;

among whom, it will be hard, if I do not find a priestess willing to devote herself to the noble purpose of rescuing from decay so extraordinary a race."

"I believe you will assist me," replied Ethelred, "and I have tokens which assure me of your power."

"Now, Ethelred," observed Edward, "you must give this young damsel as good a fortune as you have promised our Queen. Look at her ripening beauties, and majestic air."

"Do not be afraid, my pretty damsel," exclaimed the soothsayer to Matilde: "Ethelred wars only with the wicked. May it please the King to retire a few paces? I read, young lady, that you will be a wife, but I see no indication of your becoming a mother: you will endure both pleasure and pain: you will see foreign lands, and witness dire events: and your joy will be turned to grief, at seeing the lion fall beneath the boar."

Matilde stood in an attitude of thought, and the Queen said, in an under-tone, "Can your skill

portray the figure of him who is destined to be the husband of this childless wife?"

Ethelred touched the brazen tablet, and it fell on the ground. He took from the handle of his club a silver tube, covered with hieroglyphics; and, pouring upon the polished mirror some dark gray sand, there appeared a figure which we shall not describe: from a small phial he let drop some red liquor, which he poured upon the sand; and then took a thin piece of skin, and gave to Matilde the traces of the characters, which she placed in her bosom. Ethelred replaced the sand, closed the tablet, and received a gift from the Queen.

The ladies then remounted their horses; but Matilde continued, during their ride, wrapt in thought, and apparently much depressed in spirits. When they entered the castle, the Queen desired the young Countess to accompany her to her private closet. A cheerful fire was blazing on the hearth, and Philippa begged her to restore the animation which the cold had subdued.

"It is not the cold of the atmosphere," replied the maiden, "but the chill of the heart."

“What! so young, and yet have a heart to chill?”

“Yes, Philippa, I have a heart,—at least I had a heart,—but yesterday I thought it beat strangely, as if it no longer owned my power; and to-day the predictions of that savage-looking man have alarmed me, and I am weak enough to believe in his skill.”

“Recollect, my dear Matilde, that you must appear in great beauty to-day. Your suitor, John of Eltham, accompanies the Queen Dowager and his young sisters, and I should be sorry to see our cousin outshone. Come, my love, think no more of the Saxon or his astrology. Retire to your apartment, and dress out your charms to the best advantage: place this white rose in your hair, and leave coronets and plumes to the princesses Joan and Eleanor.”

On her return, Matilde found the Queen ready to accompany her husband to the grand hall of state, which was splendidly prepared.

Reginald presented Count Lorenzo de Lunheim, governor of Vienne, in Dauphiné.

“ And how,” said the King, “ shall I name you to my brother John, who has just entered ?”

“ The Count of Montauban.”

“ Earl of Cornwall,” continued Edward, “ you may recognize an old acquaintance in the Count of Montauban.”

John of Eltham cordially greeted Reginald on his return to England, and then took his place near the Countess Matilde. Prince David of Scotland, the affianced husband of Princess Joan, followed; and shortly afterwards, Queen Isabel entered with her two daughters, attended by the Earl of March.

The entertainment was what we might call very dull; and though Philippa, who was famous for powers of conversation, and accustomed from her earliest youth to society, exerted herself to make the day pass off with *éclat*, still she was obliged to confess that the party of the previous day was infinitely more agreeable.

“ It will give me great pleasure,” said her Highness to Reginald, “ to see your famed beauty of Roussillon; not because she is handsome, but be-

cause she is amiable and unaffected. The instructions which my cousin has received make her at times appear pedantic; and the airs she assumes as an heiress, are to me equally astonishing and absurd. Imagine, Sir Reginald, that she has this day refused the offer of our brother John!"

"My attention, madam, was in youth so fixed upon the noble qualities of Prince Edward, that I overlooked the qualifications of his brother; but the Lady Matilde must feel honored by such attentions, and ought to have good reasons ere she reject proposals so advantageous."

"I believe she had no reason except the maiden one—'I had rather not?'"

CHAP. XLII.

THE PEARL.

PHILIPPA withdrew to her own apartment ; and Isabel, with her daughters, went to the gallery, accompanied by the young Scottish Prince. Matilde retired to the chamber of her aunt, and was replying to various questions relative to the dresses worn by the different ladies and knights at the royal table, when a page demanded the Baroness's permission for the Marquis of Montserrent to pay his respects.

“ I have not the pleasure of knowing such a person : did he say he was acquainted with me ? ”

“ No, madame ; the esquire of his Excellency said he had not that honor.”

“ Where is the Marquis ? ”

“ In the glass gallery, awaiting your orders.”

“ Patience ! ” said the Baroness, addressing one of her ladies ; “ be pleased to look from the win-

dow in my closet, and bring me word if you are acquainted with the person of the Marquis."

"It is the handsome knight just arrived from France, madam," returned the attendant; "and he has round his throat the finest collar of pearls you ever beheld."

"It is the Count of Montauban," interposed Matilde, "who brings me a letter from my brother Agenor: I pray you, admit him."

Reginald entered; and, as he bowed gracefully to the ladies, Matilde started back on beholding the figure of Ethelred's tablet realised. He had thrown off his weighty robe of state, wearing only the white under-dress; and held in his hand a white velvet cap.

As the knight presented, on bended knee, the letter of Agenor, Matilde thought it was a pity that so handsome a figure should ever be hidden by a cumbrous robe of state. As he recovered his position, a pearl ornament described by Ethelred fell from the rose which adorned his cap, at the foot of Matilde.—With the instinctive curiosity of youth, the Countess took it up.

“ It is the most beautiful ornament,” said she, “ I ever beheld ; but the uncommon size of the pearl at first prevented my noticing those curious jewels attached to it. The pearl resembles a heart, and there is, I think, some mystery attached to these accompaniments.”

“ Very possibly there is,” replied Reginald ; “ for it was taken from the turban of a Saracen in one of the crusades.”

The brooch was handed to the Baroness, and the letter of Agenor was perused. Madame d’Arnheim remarked :—“ It appears to me a very valuable curiosity : may I ask some further particulars ?”

“ If the Lady Matilde will condescend to accept it, I will relate all that I know upon the subject.”

“ I cannot answer for her acceptance,” returned the Baroness ; “ but I should think her doing so would be satisfactory to my nephew of Montleans. When you have perused your letter, my dear niece, if there are no secrets, it would be agreeable to me to see how the young Agenor expresses himself.”

“The letter, madame, is principally in praise of his friend, the bearer, who saved not only his life, but that of one dearer to him than life. There it is.”

The Baroness found one paragraph very strongly expressed, which decided her how to act. “We have been accustomed,” said Agenor, “to give and receive presents; if therefore, in the warmth of his heart, Reginald offers you a gift, do not let your maiden modesty put him to the pain of seeing it refused; but look upon him, my dearest sister, as the friend of one who longs personally to assure you of the force of his brotherly affection.”

Madame returned the letter, and then handed the brooch to Reginald, who looked much disappointed. As Matilde was not attending to what was going on, the Baroness said,—“Press her acceptance of it yourself.”

“Lady Matilde,” said our hero, “I have a boon to ask.”

“Name it, sir,” answered the young Countess: “I will grant it for the sake of Agenor.”

“ It is the acceptance on your part of this trifle.”

“ For my brother’s sake I will not hesitate ;— but you must relate the particulars which you spoke of, as I am confident there is some mystery attached to the jewel.”

“ It was the gift of a descendant of Mahomet to her lover, a Saracen Prince : and the figures are meant as emblems of constancy. It was torn from the Saracen’s turban by a Prince of France, and subsequently given to Pope John.

“ On my departing from Avignon, I wore this cap, and his Holiness said,—‘ Take this as my parting gift ; place it in that rose, and the purity of the pearl will absorb the odour of the flower. If the pearl fall from out its blooming bed, at the feet of innocence, be assured of the existence of attraction, and do not fail to present it to the person who deserves to wear it. It is an emblem : the Romans called it ‘ Unio.’ You, beautiful lady, have proved the truth of the Pope’s prediction.”

“It is a pity to part the ornament from its rosy bed,” rejoined Matilde: “it appears so beautiful, that I must be bold enough to beg the flower also.”

With some hesitation, Reginald presented it, saying it was not worthy of her acceptance, but was a magic flower.

“I declare it is a charming flower, and smells as sweet as if it were natural: you said the pearl had the power of absorbing the perfume;—let us see if your saying will be verified.”

Reginald became abstracted in thought, and it is possible that Cecile and her red rose formed a part of his cogitations: but recovering himself, “Countess Matilde,” he added, “my intrusion upon your kindness does not end here; for I must beg your attention to the commands of the Pope. When his Holiness had himself attached the ornament, he continued:—‘In my private desk there is a collar of pearls, which I destine as the property of her who deserves to have the Soldan’s treasure;—for that small ornament, trifling as it is, has a very great value. Here is something

more likely to catch the eye, and I beg you to offer it, in my name, to the fair lady whom destiny shall make mistress of the Mahometan heart."

Reginald then took off the collar of pearls, and laid it at the feet of Matilde. "Do you imagine," exclaimed she, "that I would accept so valuable a present at your hands?"

"No, Lady Matilde, it is presented by me, but is not a gift of mine: it was the Pope's. By accident I ventured to arrange this collar around my unworthy neck: but, if you are disposed to refuse this gift of the head of the church, it will rest with yourself to return it to his Holiness through your brother, Count Agenor, giving your reasons for declining the honor intended. To speak candidly, Countess Matilde, the Pope commanded me not to wear the pearl, until after my first presentation to the Queen of England. Such an ornament as this becomes not a knight, but would be well suited to the dress you wear; although any thing which conceals a part of the lovely pillar which supports so beautiful a head must be disadvantageous to the wearer."

“ Did his Holiness instruct you how to prove his present unacceptable, and yet compel its acceptance? If refused, I suppose your Excellency would attribute that which would result from propriety of feeling, to vanity.”

“ Come, Sir Reginald,” said the Baronne, “ obey the Pope’s wishes, who seems to have decided in his own mind, though not directed in his discourse, that my niece should be the Mahometan houri, and took care to fasten the brooch so loosely, that it should fall at her feet.”

During this somewhat sagacious remark against blind destiny, Matilde permitted the collar to be arranged, and on Reginald’s retiring from the apartment, acknowledged that it was the most beautiful ornament for the neck she had ever seen, and thought the Pope a delightful man for sending her a present in so gallant a manner. Reginald having placed a gold rosette in his cap, and thrown a short mantle of rose-colored velvet over his shoulder, hastened by the private stair to the Plaisaunt.

As he turned one of the angles, his progress

was arrested by the advance of the King and Queen.

Reginald awaited their approach. "We meet as friends here, sir knight," exclaimed Philippa: "the King begs you to replace your bonnet: it is of a handsome shape, but rather of the weightiest. My head would ache to wear it, but I presume it is the Parisian mode."

Edward inquired for Matilde; and Reginald hastened to avail himself of a permission to seek the young damsel. Ascending by the principal stair, he reached a gallery, where Matilde was walking with a manuscript in her hand, trying to compose the agitation created in her by the late interview. Her heart, of whose palpitations she had complained to the Queen, was now in a state of rebellion.

On entering the Plaisaunt, the velvet fell from Reginald's shoulders, and Philippa exclaimed, "Good heavens! look, Lord Edward; there is the figure formed by the Saxon, and Matilde wears a rose and pearl!" When they approached, the Queen remarked the beauty of the necklace.

and Matilde replied, with a blush, "It is the gift of his Holiness the Pope."

"In reward, I suppose, of your brother's services?"

"It was my brother's wish I should accept such a gift."

"And the pearl?"

"That also was from Pope John: he wished the two ornaments not to be separated; and though one was more than I merited, I would not offend his Holiness by a refusal."

"Did you feel any wish to refuse such a gift from such a personage?"

"I assure your Highness," interposed Reginald, "it was in compliance with the reiterated request of Madame la Baronne, that the Lady Matilde assented."

"You were the bearer then, Sir Reginald?"

"The unworthy instrument of the Pontiff's will," replied he.

Edward began to think Reginald had found his way to the Saxon cross before this morning's visit.

“ Will you allow me,” said the King, “ to examine that beautiful ornament ! On the gold work which surrounds it, I see there is the figure of a lion struck by a spear. How beautifully it is executed ! see, here is a Moorish building, and banners, and various figures ! ”

“ Think you, Matilde,” said the Queen, in a low tone, “ there is any reference in this to the threatened sorrow ? ”

“ I know not what to think ; but when we are in private, I will communicate to you what has passed.”

“ I will not hear it, unless I may tell my husband.”

“ I know that between you there is but one heart, one mind, one soul ;—and may Heaven long continue such true matrimonial happiness, which it seldom falls to the lot of crowned heads to enjoy ! ”

Queen Isabel and the rest of the party returned from their promenade in the Plaisaunt : both the young princesses broke forth in raptures about the collar of pearls ; and when they heard it came

from so great a personage as the Pope, they begged to know whether he was old or young, ugly or handsome.

“ He is very handsome, but he is also very old,” observed our hero.

“ Well, I do not admire old beauties, whatever some other people may do,” said Joan to her sister. Queen Isabel appeared scarlet one moment, and white the next, but did not utter a word. Reginald called the King’s attention to some beautiful birds which were flying beneath the wall of the terrace. “ They are some favorites of the Queen,” remarked Edward, “ who wish to remind their provisors that it is the hour of feeding.”

In attention to the King’s remark, Philippa ordered a page to seek the basket which lay in the pavilion, and to follow her to the feeding-ground.

Queen Isabel had retired to give vent to her feelings; the Princesses had disappeared with the young Prince, and thus Matilde was left alone with De Vavasour. “ Did you remark,” said the for-

mer, “ the countenance of Queen Isabel, when Princess Joan made that childish remark ?”

“ Undoubtedly I did,” answered Reginald ; “ and, to prevent the King from making the same observation, I alluded to the birds : but did you, fair lady, see the manner with which Queen Philippa viewed the pearl, or hear what she said concerning the Saxon ?” Matilde imagined that Reginald alluded to the remark made to herself, and was evidently confused : the return of Queen Philippa relieved her from the embarrassment, and they entered the castle for the entertainments of the evening.

CHAP. XLIII.

THE KING'S CLOSET.

THE day of festivity being passed, Reginald received a summons to attend the King; and he found also the Queens Philippa and Isabel seated.

“The presence of these ladies, Reginald,” began his Highness, “will not only aid our debate, by affording their advice, but also restrain me from using those haughty and unguarded expressions which sometimes escape from my lips, and which I blame the fierceness of my nature for foolishly dictating. Now we will hear your message.” The request of the deceased monarch of France was then stated, as well as the decision that Prince had made. “And think you, noble knight,” continued the King, “that Edward is disposed to give up one iota, because Charles, who would have imprisoned both myself and my mother, thought proper, in his dying moments, to make a request for what

he calls the peace of his kingdom? The question for us first to consider is, whether my mother, Isabel of France, has a natural right to the crown; we must next consider whether there are laws in existence which bar the exercise of that right; and then inquire whether such bar attaches also to the male heirs of her body."

"At present, sire, the question is not relative to a claim to the throne, but to the establishment of a regency, which is, under all circumstances, absolutely necessary."

"True, and the fittest person to be regent is Queen Isabel, as nearest of kin to the deceased monarch. Her talents are well known; and, being still in the full vigour of life and intellect, she ought to be first considered. Admitting for the moment that King Charles's reasoning is sound, and that there exists in reality a law, which I believe to be a chimera, it would be the interest of Queen Isabel to protect the rights of her nephew, she having no direct interest in the succession; while Philippe de Valois might wish to have a rival removed, who stood between him and the throne."

“ It appears to me, Lord Edward, extremely difficult to establish the right that Queen Isabel claims; and I think her Highness would find great opposition to her power, even if it were established.”

“ Let the peers of France once proclaim my mother regent, and I will maintain her so.”

“ It appears to me that the dread of such an issue would contribute to give increased energy to opposition: the French nation has the same repugnance as the English to foreign interference; and stirring the question will but increase the enmities still alive. The kingdom of France is daily becoming more strengthened in power, and the various provinces it contains more cemented in the bonds of amity and good-will. An attack from a foreign country, in support of interference with its internal government, would strengthen instead of weakening these bonds; and the probable result of such an attack would be the loss of those fine provinces, now admitted to belong, by right of descent, to the crown of England.”

“ It would be useless to tell you, Count of

Montauban, a distinguished and well-informed warrior, that we are prepared for war. The disastrous issue of the mismanagement of public affairs, both at home and abroad, places us in that state which renders peace not only desirable, but absolutely necessary. If, however, after anxious efforts for secure alliance with Scotland, and our determination of affiancing our sister to Prince David, in compliance with the wishes of our queen-mother, the turbulent Scots should excite our wrath,—we will ourselves show them that the memory of our great Edward is still cherished, and bid them recollect that they more dreaded the bones of that illustrious King than they did the muscles, sinews, and power of his successor. Our Welsh subjects are in peaceful obedience to our laws; and we trust our marriage will give them a Prince worthy of the title of Wales, and whose valour shall bind to him their affections with their duty. We are not yet masters of the subject sufficiently to say that our hot-headed Irishers are well disposed; but I think the way is clear how to manage them. It will be necessary to keep a large and well-appoint-

ed army constantly employed there, to pay the troops regularly, and to enforce strict discipline. The best lieutenant that has been sent thither, was that spendthrift Gaveston: he kept the people in good order and obedience, and won their hearts at the same time by his liberality. Levying an army there would be also a useful measure, and we might employ it against the Scots. the pleasure of both these nations consists in fighting, and it may be as well to play off one violent spirit upon another. We have willingly made you master of our policy, without any concealment of our difficulties; but these impediments shall not prevent Edward of England from claiming his maternal rights, admitting, as he does, that he is not now prepared forcibly to uphold them.

“ We shall meet, Count Reginald, hereafter in public assembly; and recollect, if the decision of the council be against my individual voice, yet I will raise it for Isabel and the regency, though that voice were to be the war-cry of destruction both to the French and English nations. For your

courteous demeanour and attention, we give our thanks, and for the present bid you adieu."

CHAP. XLIV.

FOOD FOR LOVE AND JEALOUSY.

WHEN the audience was at an end, Isabel desired Reginald to attend her to the Plaisaunt. "It is useless," said she, "to oppose the King in his closet; but Queen Philippa is much inclined for peaceful measures; and when the point comes under public discussion, Earl Mortimer is prepared to support your wishes. There are some lords of the council who must be gained."

The Queen was leaning on the arm of her young protégé, and either admiring his manly beauty, or thinking of past days; when her reverie was interrupted by the noise of wrangling words. Reginald hastened to the entrance-gate, and there found Hobson in high argument with the sentinel on duty. Hobson, with a sagacious look and his

finger to his nose, presented a packet. It was directed to Queen Isabel. On reading its contents, the Queen said to Reginald, "I must to London, and you shall be my escort. Give orders for our departure."

"I must demand King Edward's permission; and that obtained, am your Highness's slave."

"Here he comes, with his adored mate: they always put me in mind of turtle-doves, and I believe are eternally billing and cooing. It strikes me they grow thin; and Philippa, if she does not take care, will lose those beauties which Edward so admires. My son," pursued she, addressing the King, "Reginald has a boon to ask of your Highness."

"I will grant him any," was the reply.

"Except permission to depart," said Philippa.

"That is exactly what he wants, and his purpose is to escort a queen," rejoined Isabel.

"My dear mother, Philippa laid our royal sword on her chosen knight."

"And a queen dowager must give way to a queen regnant, I suppose!"

“ Dispose of our knight, madame, as you will,” interrupted Philippa; “ but hasten his return.”

“ The sooner we depart, madame,” rejoined Isabel, “ the sooner shall Reginald be again at your feet.”

“ Not at ours, Queen Isabel, but at those of our fair cousin.”

“ Do you, madame, take part against our son? or think you,” added Isabel, haughtily, “ that a Plantagenet is unworthy to wed an heiress of Hainault?”

“ Queen mother, I pray you, restrain your tongue,” answered Edward: “ we have borne much at your hands; take care how you provoke our wrath, by insulting our Queen. Your Highness’s attendants are in waiting.”

Queen Isabel, in an unceremonious manner, departed; and Reginald, anxious to remove himself from a scene in which he had unconsciously formed a principal feature, leaped on his horse, and took the command of the Queen’s escort.

“ Our royal mother,” exclaimed the king, “ has not carried off also the Count Lorenzo; nor shall

her petulance destroy our politeness ;—we will invite him to our table.” A page in waiting announced to Lorenzo the honor intended him, and he took his seat facing the Countess Matilde.—Royal persons mix so little with the world, that they are naturally curious to hear the domestic history of their fellow-beings. Lorenzo was encouraged to relate various circumstances connected with our past story.

“ It seems, Count,” observed Edward, “ that your leader is born under a star of fortune ; and I know not whether most to praise his self-command or his valour.”

“ Sir Reginald, sire,” rejoined Lorenzo, “ has various claims to public notice ; and in civil courts, as well as martial fields, has displayed great powers. He has also essayed oratory ; for he was a candidate for the silver rose in the Court of Love.”

“ Your account of his gallant bearing in behalf of the wife of my brother pleases me the most,” said Matilde. “ What think you of Aurélie ?”

“ I am scarcely, madame, an impartial observer ;

for before Count Agenor beheld her, I was her devoted admirer."

"So, she deserted you for my brother?"

"No, lady! she preferred your brother to your humble servant."

King Edward turned the subject to Avignon, and to the tournament there held. "I suppose," said Philippa, "the lady Aurélie was the fair-one who inspired De Vavasour to deeds of glory?"

"No, illustrious Princess!" replied Lorenzo: "he wore there the colours of Cecile de Cominges."

Matilde changed colour. Lorenzo, who had perhaps tasted too frequently the exhilarating cup, continued:—"In truth, madame, were I not speaking in such company, I should say, none could so inspire as the captivating Cecile!"

"Is she more beautiful than Laura?" asked Matilde.

"To my taste, and that of my friend, infinitely superior."

The Queen again changed the subject to Petrarch,—perceiving evident marks of the effect

produced by the high panegyrics which Lorenzo bestowed on his friend, whom he considered superior to all the world; and also thinking that the name of Cecile might in prudence have been omitted.

“ May I inquire,” said the King, “ into the character of the Prince Primate and Pope John, who seem both so interested in your hero’s welfare?”

“ Your Highness may well call him a hero,” exclaimed Lorenzo; “ for in the field, or in the bower, none can equal Sir Reginald de Vavasour.”

Again the Queen thought of love and jealousy. “ You do not answer his Highness’s question,” said she.

“ The Prince Primate is, by education, a soldier; by necessity, a priest: John, on the contrary, is a priest by choice, and by necessity a soldier. The Primate is unaffectedly generous; the Pope altogether penurious: the Primate would resign all his high dignities, to wed one lovely woman; while John would not part with a single privilege, to gain the hearts of the whole sex.”

“The Primate,” rejoined the royal host, “must be my friend; and I must be, or appear to be, the friend of the Pope.—How is our ambassador esteemed at the court of Avignon?”

“Most highly, sire, and most deservedly.”

“His report of the manners of the inhabitants, nay, even of some of those who should act otherwise,—is not favorable; and I think it wonderful that Reginald should so well have escaped temptation.”

“True, sire! for when he returned as the successful defender of the fair sex, all hearts were open to receive him.”

“May I ask, sir,” inquired Philippa, “if Cecile de Cominges is married or unmarried?”

“You may say, neither one nor the other, or both;—for she is considered by a decree—no, what do I say?—not by a decree, but by a decision:—no, not that!—In short, madame, she is contracted to be married, and considers herself as a bride.”

The various subjects that were discussed prolonged the conversation until a late hour; and

when the King retired, he declared to Philippa that the descriptions and lively character of the young secretary and soldier had fully compensated him for the absence of his principal guest.

“ It is fortunate,” said Philippa, “ that no damsel was present, who expected devotion at the hands of our knight.”

“ Surely, Count Lorenzo said nothing but what must have encouraged the passion of love ?”

“ Yes, Lord Edward! and if Love had attacked with success, the Count's story might have given rise to another passion, called jealousy: for it seems tolerably evident, that our young friend has formed an attachment, of the results of which we have no positive proof.”

“ Think you, Philippa, that this gallant knight, among his other trophies, has made a conquest of our cold cousin's heart?—if so, and that the victor loves another, our brother will be revenged.”

“ I know not what to think of it, my Edward! women will be women, and love will make sad havoc in their hearts. I may confide to you that the Baronne d'Arnheim has put me in possession

of the family secrets, and that the match is decided upon, if our haughty beauty will consent."

"Sir Reginald is of high distinction, and if he did not come here free to marry, I trust he will not dare to woo. The pure heart of a maiden must not be made the sport of a false knight. If our guest be such a caitiff, I would pluck those decorations, so honorably won, from the breast which they now adorn, and trample them under my feet."

"Bravely said, Lord Edward! but I put my trust in virtue; and hope the friend of my husband may always prove what he now is,—the pride and ornament of chivalry!"

CHAP. XLV.

AN INTERRUPTION.

WHILE Edward and Philippa canvassed possibilities, Reginald reflected, as he escorted Isabel, upon probabilities. The conversation which had passed between him and the Bishop had left an impression on his mind; and the superior beauty of the young Countess Matilde had certainly added to the effect which his excellency had intended to produce. Not a single line had reached him in apology for the hasty and unjust treatment he had received from Cecile, and the word *false* still tingled in his ears. “Would she were a man!” exclaimed he. It is possible that, at the same moment, Cecile wished a similar change. No matter.

His reveries were interrupted by the trumpets of the guard saluting Queen Isabel, and Reginald was scarcely in time to assist her to the ground.

“ I am sure, sir knight,” said the Queen, “ you have left a lady-love in France. Were I in my youth, it would be my endeavour for a while to make you forget the absent fair; but as it is, there are beauties in our court worthy the eye of a gallant cavalier; and, trust me, a handsome knight like you will not find them cruel.”

The cheeks of the youth became scarlet, as he listened to such temptations offered by a Queen; but he forbore reply.

The door of Isabel's private closet was open, and she started back when she recognized the stranger who had solicited an audience. Turning hastily to Reginald, she thanked him for his attendance, and bade him return to Windsor.

Reginald perceived the lofty figure of a richly-clad personage, of dignified air, but would not allow himself to indulge in surmises.

“ Do you know, sir,” said Isabel to the stranger, “ a certain knight who deserted the colours of his sworn mistress even when she condescended to demand his aid?”

“ Such a treacherous act would be as unmanly

as impossible: Isabel of France is much too handsome to be deserted."

"Say, *was* too handsome, and you will speak truth: some sixteen years ago we should not even have dreamt of such an act."

"No one, on looking at Isabel, could imagine six, much less sixteen years, had passed since first ——"

"It seems, sir knight, that you have not sacrificed your gallantry with your liberty; and your gaiety convinces me, that the chains of wedlock are not always galling."

"My chains are very light; and the sylph who assisted in throwing them over my shoulders is now occupied with the care of a young damsel, who cannot run away; so, in England, I am free to be your Highness's slave."

"Were you withholden from our service by such light chains?"

"A variety of circumstances caused delay; but the moment my knights were prepared, I hastened to Paris, where I heard of your success; and the King, your brother, commanded my return."

“ Had you loved the Queen as you did the Princess, neither knights nor King would have delayed you.”

“ I have seized the first moment that fate has permitted, to throw myself at your feet, and to vow that to me you appear more lovely ——.”

At that moment the door opened, and Earl Mortimer stood before them: it was some time before the Queen could release her arm from the folds of the mantle of the knight, on whose shoulder she reclined. Mortimer stood in silent astonishment: his cheek grew almost black with rage: at last his voice found utterance. “ Rodolphe of Montleans, in the closet of Isabel! How dares he enter this apartment?”

“ The daring,” answered Rodolphe, “ is with Mortimer, whom his slaves call Earl of March; but who can be no nobleman, or he would not interrupt the privacy of a lady’s chamber.”

“ That lady is a Queen, and commands respect.”

“ The disrespect rests with the intruder: I used none.”

“ Did not Charles, the brother of Isabel, at my instigation, command you not to see the Queen?”

“ Charles is dead, and perhaps Mortimer’s days are numbered: retire, or dread the effects of a strong arm and a sharp two-edged sword. Steel pays no respect to rank, especially when ill acquired.

“ My son would be more fit to argue with you in such a strain. I am too old to wield a sword; but my mind is firm, though my arm is weak.”

“ Yes, you can plan villany for others to execute.”

“ Leave the apartment, or the Queen’s guards shall force you from it.”

“ Mortimer, I despise the threats of a murderer and a coward: I defy you and your guards. If the Queen holds up her smallest finger, I will depart.”

The Queen, naturally haughty with others, was overawed by Mortimer; and dreading a rupture with him, entreated Rodolphe to retire. The brow of the indignant warrior became calm; he crossed his hands upon his breast, and left the apartment

CHAP. XLVI.

CURIOSITY.

INSTEAD of returning to Windsor, Reginald, unattended except by Hobson, rode to a solitary house in the middle of the forest, and asking for a night's lodging, was instantly admitted: he retired to a secluded chamber, and, contrary to his common habits, demanded no refreshments. The supper prepared for him was therefore devoured by his groom, who romanced it away in the kitchen like a crusader, while his master slept.

At earliest dawn, Reginald mounted his favorite cropped courser, of reddish colour, and guided him towards the Saxon's cross. After giving the necessary summons, Ethelred appeared.

"The sun rises brightly," exclaimed the sage: "this will be for you, my son, a fortunate day."

"To reward your good bodings, take, my friend, this small gift," answered Reginald.

Ethelred regarded the five broad pieces of gold :
“ it is an offering worthy of a Prince, which title
you have more right to than you are aware of.”

“ Would you could tell who my parents
were !”

“ We will not speak of such matters in open
air : follow me, and we will consult the book of
the stars. Before you descend, you must promise
not to forget the helpmate of whom we spoke ; and
she must be handsome and well shaped : I do not
want to have another ugly imp, instead of a pro-
per Saxon child.”

“ I will fulfil my promise, cost what it may ;
but where could you lodge a handsome woman ?”

“ I have not been idle since my residence here ;
and your bounty will, in addition to that of the
King, enable me to finish my works.”

In the midst of the thick coppice which we have
described, was a square grass-plat : on this Ethel-
red stood facing the sun ; he desired Reginald to
turn his back, and hold him fast by the arm as they
descended.

When they reached the bottom, a heavy weight was attached to the plat on which they stood; and when Reginald found himself in safety, the weight was removed, and the opening closed by the rapid replacement of what in reality was a strong trap-door, which was moved up and down by weights, ropes, and pulleys. Reginald looked in silence for the sequel of his adventure.

“ Lights, imp ! ” exclaimed Ethelred.

“ Yes, father ! ” was replied, and a creature appeared with two torches, which threw a blueish light upon a countenance naturally of a dark yellow. The imp had eyes more like saucers than any thing belonging to a human being. His black hair stood straight up on the top of his head, and hung as straightly down at the sides, leaving two enormous ears standing out from the caput, something like the lamps of a modern mail-coach.

“ Lead the way, Umptikin ! ”

They passed by a narrow passage into a square apartment, in the centre of which was a species of Saxon altar.

The imp having fixed the torches on either side, disappeared. “ Now,” said Ethelred to our knight, “ speak your wishes.”

“ I have asked you concerning my parents.”

Ethelred threw some liquid on a large mirror. A young female appeared with flowing robes. He then threw some more liquid, and there appeared a young man, richly dressed. “ Your parents,” said he, “ were of high station, but of their fate I know nothing.”

Reginald was for a moment pensive, and then said, “ Show me, Ethelred, the place you destine for the future bride of a powerful Saxon.”

“ Umptikin, uncloze the door !” They entered a large and commodious cavern. It was evidently the remains of a quarry of stone. Great pillars of rock supported the arched roof; light was admitted by spacious openings which could be closed by strong and rudely-constructed barriers. There were seats of rough branches of oak, couches of the same materials, a large chimney, plenty of skins of deer, of wolves, hares, rabbits, foxes, &c. tables, shelves, and various comforts, which Re-

ginald did not expect to find with his uncouth acquaintance. The continuation of their researches was impeded by the sound of a bell.

“ Umptikin, see whose curiosity intrudes upon my occupations.” Umptikin described the figures of two women. “ Perhaps,” cried De Vavasour, “ it is the Queen.”

“ No,” answered Ethelred, “ not the Queen Philippa. She has no cause for curiosity. All she wishes for, she has, or will have.”

While the Saxon was preparing to ascend, Reginald, not desiring to be alone with Umptikin, begged permission to accompany him. Giving the imp a piece of silver, he seated himself on the plat, and Umptikin turning a wheel and rope, they gradually ascended. Both the ladies were veiled. One advanced, the other retired. When Ethelred was at the cross, it was with difficulty Reginald heard the following discourse. The lady, showing the Saxon an emblem, asked :—

“ Is the person who gave me this, the man destined to be my husband ?”

“ You can judge of that as well as I.”

“ When will he depart?”

“ He will soon receive orders.”

The lady hearing the neigh of a horse, hastily retired. Reginald observed that she did not seem satisfied with the answers she received.

“ It is very difficult,” replied the soothsayer, “ to satisfy women: they will leave every thing to destiny, and nothing to self-guidance. I never can satisfy Queen Isabel; she is the most curious and the most obstinate person in the world. I am compelled to hide many things from her which she would not like to learn, but which she insists on hearing.”

After some further converse, Reginald mounted his horse, which had been the cause of fear to the curious damsel, and rode towards the house in which he had passed the night. Hobson was prepared to attend him, and Reginald proceeded to the castle, where a messenger from the Bishop of Arras awaited his return.

CHAP. XLVII.

A PROPOSAL.

THE letter of the bishop related to political matters ; but it enclosed another, which, although brief, was, in the present state of Sir Reginald's mind, of great import.

“ Instead of awaiting my explanation,” the epistle ran, “ you have basely avoided me. I again stamp on your forehead the name of a traitor false to his love, and with that act banish you for ever from my presence.—C. de C.”

Reginald impatiently awaited a summons to the presence of Edward, by whom he was received with constraint : Philippa was distant, and Matilde more than usually haughty. When the chaplain had repeated the benediction, Reginald felt an inclination to leave the table, and express his sentiments ; but he allowed the rising words of passion almost to choke him ere he would so

offend against established rule as to give them utterance. He declined all offers of food, and sat motionless as an automaton.

“Are you unwell, Sir Reginald?” said Philippa, at length, kindly.

“Not ill, madame, but sick at heart.”

“Has your messenger brought bad tidings?”

“On the contrary, madame, I at first thought them good ; but I now find them evil.”

“How, Sir Reginald !” said the King ; “what have you found here that could turn good to evil?”

“A cold reception, Lord Edward !”

The King looked discomposed, adding : “Your party to London has been, I hope, agreeable ? we have odd rumours here ;—know you of them ?”

“I did not remain in London longer than my duty to Queen Isabel required : I conducted her Highness to her private closet, and then retired.”

“To visit our gay societies, I suppose : but they are bad associations for such youths of distinction as Sir Reginald De Vavasour.”

“Am I compelled to give your Highness an account of my proceedings ?”

“ Not at present, Marquis of Montserrent !” and the King rose and left the apartment.

“ Something has discomposed his Highness,” said Philippa : “ I will follow him.”

Matilde and Reginald, thus left alone, felt mutually embarrassed. This embarrassment was increased by a question relative to his departure. Reginald in reply stated his intention of returning to Paris, as soon as he had received King Edward’s final answer, there to await orders.

“ It is very disagreeable to be subjected to the orders of others.”

“ A soldier, madame, must not think so.”

“ Is there any reason to imagine there will be services at present for a soldier to perform ?”

“ If not required in France, my services will be devoted in aid of King Robert of Naples, now in arms in support of Pope John.”

“ An absolute knight-errant, I declare. I foolishly imagined there was a damsel who had the power of restraining such wanderings.” No answer being given to this, Matilde proceeded :—
“ Your hesitation confirms me in the thought that

there is another star besides that of glory in your horizon. Are you certain it was the Pope who gave you that red rose?"

"I never affirmed that it was."

"The rose has lost its perfume."

"It is strange that you, who appear so haughty and so cold, can have a heart sufficiently warm to make that perfume evaporate into air."

"I have never behaved haughtily towards you, whom I consider as my equal."

"If I dare consider myself your equal, and offer ——"

"Before you proceed, Sir Reginald, hear me! When persons meet, willing to enter into a treaty, each party must stand on the same ground. I consider you my equal in rank and fortune, and my superior in worldly estimation. As to our mutual accomplishments, we have not had time to develop them; but there is one point on which we are not equal, and if it is that on which you would treat, I must at once break up the meeting."

"I would not offend you for the world; and yet

there is a subject nearest my heart, on which I would speak ; it is love.”

“ You are, I believe, capable of expatiating on that subject ; it is one of which I am ignorant : but we are both young enough to change,—you to forget what you know, and I to learn that which I know not.”

“ I would be your instructor, Matilde.”

“ And having taught me my lesson, leave me to con it over in my own solitary chamber, while my preceptor is engaged with making, in a distant land, the same display of his learning and skill.”

“ And do you place so little value on your charms, as to think that a knight who wears your resplendent chains could so easily disentangle himself from them ?—or do you place so little reliance on my character and honor, as to imagine me capable of conduct so base as that which you describe ?”

“ Prince Reginald, if I could place your character in any but the fairest light, I would not have condescended to hold private intercourse

with you ; but men do not view such subjects as those of which we speak in the same light as women. I read that men have gloried in winning female hearts : the only glory with mine is, that it will not easily be won. No woman could object to Prince John, but there is one who has refused him."

" If that had been for my sake, I should have been the proudest of mortals."

" It is not necessary for me to say more than that it was for my own sake ; and if another person whom I know were to address me in the same language, I should for my own sake say,—Take this rose !"—and she handed to him the now perfumeless gift.

With an impatience natural to his character, he threw it into the air ; but caught it again, saying, " No ! you, Matilde, have worn it ; and I will, on your account, place it near my heart."

" For the sake of her who first gave it you."

" That rose was given me before the battle of Saintes. It was, I have said, a magic gift ; but virtuous purity triumphs over magic charms. You

act wisely, Matilde, in refusing to hear me. I am unworthy of you. Banish me for ever from your sight, and hear my parting vow never to wed another. Bellona shall be my life's partner; and awakened by her trumpet, my wandering steps shall move in fields of war, and my last words of prayer for your happiness be drowned by the shrillness of the clarion's notes."

Reginald appeared much affected: Matilde became alarmed at the convulsive movements of his manly chest, and the trembling of his limbs. "For heaven's sake, be not thus unmanned by a weak woman's words. I have not said, Begone for ever!"

"And have I hopes, then, that patient constancy may procure my pardon; may make you forget that I have erred from the path of rectitude and virtue, although not from that of honor? I am free to choose the partner of my life; I have chosen you; and if you think me unworthy, I will to the field, and bring back fresh laurels to lay at your feet."

"I will own," rejoined the lady, "that I have

long dwelt upon your name with pleasure ; that I have heard the King speak of you with the enthusiasm of friendship, and the Queen with admiration ; but you have destroyed one of my fairy-built visions, and the fading dream has left only relics of its existence. I hoped to find you perfect, while in mortality perfection does not exist. There are others, Sir Reginald, less difficult to please."

" But there is none like Matilde."

A page now requested the presence of Sir Reginald in the closet of the King ; but it is not at present necessary to describe what occurred there.

CHAP. XLVIII.

PROPHECY.

WHEN the Archbishop of Canterbury received notice to attend the King at Eltham, he felt how strongly necessary it was to prevent Edward from entering into any discussion which might lead to war. His Grace was decidedly of opinion, that England and France neither could nor should be ever united under one ruler; and so thinking, it behoved him to use every exertion to prevent unnecessary irritation or useless demands. In consequence of this determination, the Archbishop arrived on Sunday at Windsor, and availing himself of his right to preach before the King, mounted the pulpit. The text which he chose was:—"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," &c. He commenced his discourse with the duty and submission due to kings, and to the church; and concluded by commanding, not only strict obe-

dience to the written, but to the implied words. “Kings,” said he, “are vicegerents upon earth; and in his dying moments, Charles of France bequeathed his throne to Philippe, as rightful possessor, provided his Queen was not blessed with a male descendant. An interference with such a bequest would be sinful,—would be taking from Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s.”

After service was ended, the Archbishop demanded an audience, and remained four hours closeted with the King. With difficulty did Edward restrain the haughtiness of his character: at length his patience was quite exhausted. “Monseigneur of Canterbury,” exclaimed he, “the Queen waits: you forget, in your zeal for peace, that you are wasting your words on one who is but the shadow of a King. Go to Eltham, and speak to the lords of the council, and carry with you this assurance,—that I, Edward of England, and grandson of a noble warrior, will support the just rights I inherit, whether paternally or maternally. Having said this, I will acknowledge, my lord of Canterbury, that you act as a churchman should do.

in preaching peace; but you do not speak as a politic statesman, when you preach doctrines injurious to your sovereign's rights."

"Your pardon, my liege! I wish to speak as a statesman, as well as a divine. In my opinion, England and France can never be united in one empire: if your Highness ascend the throne of France, you must govern England by a deputy: France, as the larger country, as well as from its intestine feuds, would claim the greater portion of your care; and the interests of England would be neglected. England has a natural claim to your care: England, under a just and wise prince, should become a great kingdom, instead of being lost as a petty state. If you, as King of England and France, give to the former your undivided care and attention, France would deeply lament the transfer of the throne from the house of Valois to that of Plantagenet. Without alluding to national prejudices, without appealing to past jealousies, let me turn your eyes to your own kingdoms. You call yourself King of Ireland; but have you any permanent power over that turbulent

people? Your grandfather had determined to be King of Scotland: why should not you entertain the same views? By the natural formation of this island, England, Scotland, and Wales should make one kingdom; and if the three were closely united under the same sovereign, the advantages, in point of union, strength, and internal happiness, would be incalculable. But the case is entirely different in regard to France: France is too great to be a subordinate power; and England, though smaller, is too proud."

"My Lord Archbishop, we will discuss the question calmly in council. A sovereign must not relinquish his rights; but there is much truth in your argument."

As Edward accompanied Philippa to Eltham, he repeated the conversation with the prelate.

"There is great force," said he, "in that remark relative to Scotland. How foolish it is of Queen Isabel, for the sake of dignifying her daughter as a Queen, to injure the interests of the kingdom! but our mother is at present too strong to be opposed; and therefore I must yield to that

which I cannot avoid. When I am King indeed, we will see whether the crown, not only of Scotland, but of France also, cannot sit on the same brow with that of England and Ireland. Macedon was but a principality, yet Alexander's empire became mighty indeed. Italy was but a kingdom, yet Augustus ruled the world. Give birth to a son, Philippa, capable of seconding my views, and let other nations tremble at the name of Edward."

"You speak and think like an ambitious hero. I prophesy we shall have a son worthy of your name."

"Well, my love, we must not lose time in fulfilling the prophecy, for the day will come when such aid will be needed."

CHAP. XLIX.

FAILURES.

IN the council-chamber at Eltham, the King listened to the arguments for and against the demand of Philippe of Valois: Queen Isabel took a decided lead in favor of the assertion of her rights; and Earl Mortimer, irritated at the insult he had received from Count Rodolphe, strongly supported her arguments. In vain did the Archbishop entreat his Highness to be prudent. Prince Reginald was admitted; and the King, rising, addressed him thus:—"Ambassador of France, we have appointed certain of our nobles to be bearers of our answer to Prince Philippe of Valois; and with this assurance, we give you permission to depart."

Isabel looked in vain for Count Rodolphe, amid the suite of Reginald, who, bowing to the royal throne, left the hall.

“ Before I leave England,” said De Vavasour, “ I will make another effort to subdue the heart of that proud fair-one. Lorenzo, come hither ! Ride forthwith to Windsor, and demand permission for me to visit the Countess Matilde.”

The messenger was admitted to the presence of Matilde, and thus spoke :—“ Sir Reginald, having received the King’s licence to depart, wishes to be the bearer of happy tidings from you, madame, to your brother and his fair lady, whom I am assured you would love, as she is all perfection.”

“ But, Count Lorenzo, I do not always like perfection, at least that sort which is constantly brought before one’s notice. Agenor, in his letters, always praises Aurélie as perfection ; my father sounds the same note ; Prince Reginald echoes the Count ; and you, sir, speak of nothing but Aurélie. I wish to ask you, Count, is your *perfection* so great a beauty as Mademoiselle de Cominges ?”

“ Why, madame, as to that lady, I have nothing further to say.”

“ But it is of that lady I particularly wish to hear : is she also perfection ?”

“ Some persons admire her greatly.”

“ And among the pre-eminent admirers stands Reginald de Vavasour?”

“ Who is now come to throw himself at the feet of beauty,” said our hero, entering at the moment, and kneeling before the haughty damsel, who with a mixture of pride and pleasure beheld his humbled position. Lorenzo hastily withdrew, whilst Matilde exclaimed:—“ It is the heiress of Hainault, and not Matilde, that Sir Reginald seeks to wed. Rise, sir! this position neither becomes your rank, nor suits my wishes.”

“ When Rodolphe of Montleans,” replied Reginald, “ offered me the hand of his daughter, I was an humble unknown: by the grace of King Charles, I now hold a station in life which authorises me to enter into the presence even of a Princess of Hainault; but as that entrance is an intrusion, I for ever take my leave.”

“ We imagined your Excellency had already embarked.”

“ Think you, Countess Matilde, that Reginald

is so cold, so ungrateful, as not to thank his best friends for their innumerable kindnesses?"

"I thought Sir Reginald always recollected that he represented a King, and sent his personal respects, his thanks, or his adieus, equally by proxy."

"In affairs of state it is oftentimes advisable to employ those who can command their own tempers, while they wish to counteract the views of others, or obtain some great and defined object; but in affairs of the heart, it would be always most desirable to speak in person, where attention may be expected: there are, nevertheless, cases wherein the assistance of a third person may be most serviceable."

"Think you the aid of such a person as Don Hubert advantageous to any cause?"

"In a military cause, yes; but not where woman is concerned."

"Why then send such a man into my presence?"

"You speak in riddles, madame."

"I will be more explicit: I have received a message from my father, commanding me to re-

ceive the hand of the Marquis of Montserrent, on pain of his eternal displeasure; and the messenger called himself Don Hubert."

Before Reginald could reply, the King and Queen entered: while parting civilities were exchanged, Matilde remained in deep thought.

"Our ambassadors are prepared," said Edward; "and I hope the peers of France will so decide, as to ensure justice to those entitled to govern, as well as happiness to those who are to be governed. We think it truly kind of you, De Vavasour, in such a busy moment, to find time to discharge the courtesies of life; and we wish you every happiness until our next meeting. Accept, we pray you, this ring: it belonged formerly to a person whom you resemble; I allude to the Earl of Ulleswater."

Philippa presented a chain of silk and gold, with a medallion pendent from it: then turning to Matilde, said,—“Has our cousin no parting gift?”

“She possesses nothing worthy of being presented to so distinguished a personage as the Marquis de Montserrent.”

Our readers will not be surprised at hearing that

Reginald left Windsor in a rage, and galloped to the Saxon: he abused Ethelred and astrology; and having satisfied himself that he was very just and very eloquent, received this simple answer: "You have got a woman to deal with; it is easier to deal with the devil." The response produced a shout from Umptikin. Ethelred continued:—"You will not forget that I did all I could do: you and the young lady are only to blame; not I, or the stars. As a knight of honor, you will recollect your promise, and bring me a wife."

"I have pledged my word, Saxon! and will not break from it; but you have either been deceived, or you deceive."

"Ethelred," replied the Saxon, "is no deceiver: you have much yet to learn, and much to suffer. You now leave this country in peace; you may return in an angry garb: there are bloody spots in the sky!" Ethelred sunk from his view, and Reginald turned his horse's head towards London, and in no very pleasant mood embarked for the coast of France.

CHAP. XLIX.

GOOD FORTUNE.

UNWILLING to break the thread of our narrative, we have postponed until this chapter the relation of circumstances connected with the fate of Cecile de Cominges.

The packet of letters which we mentioned that the Bishop of Arras had received by express from Avignon, contained some of considerable importance. The first we shall notice was from the Count de Cominges to Cecile:—

“ My dear daughter,

“ The silence of your affianced husband, the Vicomte de Leontin, was rather unaccountable. I knew him to be a worthy, though not a communicative man. He preferred, as I now do, study to love. He knew that study improves youth, and delights old age ;—is an ornament in prosperity,

and a solace in adversity ;—is pleasing at home, and no impediment abroad, but is carried with us wherever we go ;—while in love every thing tends to raise strife, quarrels, and warfare. Le Vicomte was a worthy, ay, in some points a sensible man, with a bad constitution. He asked you in marriage for friendship's sake towards me. It was with us, as Sallust says, ' idem velle, idem nolle : ' we wished, and you consented. It happened that the worthy man did not wish to hear further from you, but ' dum tacet, clamo.' The poor man is dead ;—so is the decision of La Cour d'Amour. But no harm must be said of the dead : so come to the dulce domum of

“ Your respectful and affectionate parent,

“ Le Comte de Cominges.

“ If you can provide yourself prudentially with another husband,—bene—verbum sat.”

A second letter to Cecile ran thus :—“ The delay of a few days has brought further news, but I must address the purport to our friend

the Bishop. The Pursuivant will soon return :
responde, mea filia !”

The letter addressed to the Bishop was as follows :

“ Esteemed Excellency,

“ By my last advice, my daughter is informed of the loss we have sustained in the person of her husband elect. That worthy nobleman, in his latest moments, felt an interest in the welfare of her whom he had selected as the mistress of his fortune, and the partner of his life. These are his words : ‘ Feeling, my friend, that recovery is now hopeless, and finding that the various efforts I have made, by visiting all the warm springs, and taking all the medicines ordered, have proved ineffectual,—I resign myself patiently to my fate, and wait until that paralysis, which has so long seized my limbs, shall end my miserable life. I have behaved cruelly towards your daughter ; and the only recompense I can make is by paying into her hands the sum to be forfeited if the contract was not fulfilled. Further, I will treble

that sum if she will remain unmarried for twelve months, and call herself by the additional name of Leontin, in compliment to my memory.’”

The letter contained many requests as to advice for her future conduct. “ Surely,” said the Bishop, “ Cecile cannot be so foolish as to refuse these terms? I think the news too good to brook delay.”

It was still an early hour, and the page said his mistress had not left her chamber. “ Alice, tell your lady that I have news of great importance to communicate.”

“ I am very sure, as it is only your Excellency, that my lady will receive you: poor soul! she seems very unhappy, and perhaps your Excellency could console her.” The Bishop entered. Alice was ordered to retire. The Bishop’s astonishment was very great on beholding the luxury and elegance of the bed-chamber of Mademoiselle Cecile. Every thing that Paris could furnish, or money provide, was displayed to his wondering and delighted senses. The night-dress of the disconsolate fair was equally rich and becoming.

“ The news I have to tell my beautiful audientress is of a mixed nature : but I think the one being a positive and permanent good, and the other but a temporary evil, her soundness of judgment, as well as accurate knowledge of the world, will soon lead her to decide, as I have done, that the good infinitely preponderates.”

“ Why did not Reginald seek me before he went ?”

“ It was too early an hour to disturb you.”

“ He *knew* too well that all hours were equal to me, so that he came ; and my page, by my orders, has not been in bed.”

“ Cecile, I will not pretend ignorance as to the intimacy existing between you ; nor will I deny that the Regent’s orders were instantly obeyed by my advice ; and, had you been in my situation, you would have acted as I did.”

“ Did he leave no message ?”

“ He was in such a state of mind, that I was obliged to write down the Regent’s instructions, and deliver them to Lorenzo. Now comes the antidote.”

When Cecile had read the news, she said, “ If Reginald marries me, he will not marry a beggar. I will obey all the Viscount’s directions ; and feel grateful for his kindness.”

“ The Pursuivant returns to-morrow.”

“ As soon as proper arrangement is made, I will set out.”

“ Do not think me impertinent, if I offer to be your escort. I know that I alone can serve you, and that Reginald would only injure your cause.”

“ Prove to me, *Sieur Pierre*, how you can serve me.”

“ Reginald ought not to marry you ; nor ought you, were he to make an offer, to accept it. I am debarred, by my professional vows, from devoting myself to a wife ; but there is great allowance made for those who submit to such vows, and there is no scandal attached to the intimacies that exist with persons so situated, provided they have the sense and delicacy not to offend by glaring immorality or vicious luxuriousness. Thus an attachment to one beautiful object is considered inoffensive.

while a general devotion to the lighter portion of the fair sex carries with it both censure and odium. Cecile, I have long been devoted to your charms, and you have repulsed me with candour and ingenuousness. Bind me to your interests by kindness, and I will build up your fortunes. If you willingly release Reginald, you place yourself in an elevated position, and have him at your feet: whether married or single, he will follow your dictates; he will feel himself bound in honor to make such reparation for not devoting himself to you, when released from your service. You have parted under feelings of irritation, you have dismissed him, but I think you yet love him. Leave him free, and he will consider you as a martyr to his honor, and a sacrifice on the altar of his ambition. Cecile, I know the workings of your heart; and with all the force of your passion, you would not marry, without hoping to forward and share his ambitious views. There is a passion latent in your breast which I can lay open to view;—it is a passion for the power, enjoyment, and luxury given by wealth. This luxurious apartment, un-

known to the richest inhabitants of Paris;—this costly robe; these vessels and ewers of silver and gold,—assure me of the truth of my observation, even if I had not long known it by studying your character: if Reginald had seen you, he would have thought that your bed was Asia, and that you enriched it like a pearl; and the orders of Philippe, the interests of the Pope and the kingdom, would have vanished from the memory of your Antony, while his Cleopatra would alone have revelled in his thoughts. But your ideas are too exalted: you are not, like that unfortunate Queen, the slave of sensuality: you admired with fervor, and you lavished your favors with prodigality; but your mind is as strong as your form is beautiful, and I am confident you cannot wish to sink the character of the hero in that of the whining lover.”

“ You are an accurate observer of human nature, Pierre! I have my passions, but as yet they have not quite mastered me; and warmly as I feel towards Reginald, I would not see him sacrifice one iota of his honor: but proceed with your rea-

soning; and if you conduct it as calmly as you have done, I will give you credit for more prudence, and less passion, than I considered you to possess in the convent of Santa Clara."

"I fear my passions are stronger than my prudence; but much depends upon this interview, and I have a difficult task to perform. Reginald has acted, and will continue to act, under my advice: if you leave him to uphold the public as well as his private interests, he will feel bound to act as justly towards you as Monsieur de Leontin has done. He is at present rich in gifts from the royal treasury. You are firm in the favor of Pope John, and his wealth is immense. He has not yet requited the services of Prince Reginald, but assuredly will do so. Continue to guide Reginald, and you will hold the key of the papal caskets. Remember the ornaments worn by Don Alphonso de Grenada."

"I knew instantly that you had discovered me, but thought I could rely on your secresy, even under more difficult circumstances."

"Continue to rely on me; and while I rise in

this world, as I shall undoubtedly do, you shall partake my prosperity. Reginald stands on a less sure foundation: he cannot be master of his own fortune, for he must always be engaged in expenses attending upon soldiers, castles, embassies, and war. I foresee all the difficulties of his station. When Edward has done homage for Guienne, he will be his subject, as well as that of France. War will undoubtedly arise between the two countries; and if he espouse the part of England, he will lose Montauban; if that of France, Agen. If it be your wish to marry, who so likely to attract as the beautiful and rich widow? I myself know a person of high rank, who will be at your feet ere half your time of widowhood is worn out."

"If he be worth accepting, I will not refuse his offer, for I am determined to marry as soon as my year of loneliness is over; and I will, this day, by letter, release Reginald from all engagements of the heart. I should feel miserable if I injured his prospects by indulging the paltry gratification of my own vanity, at the expense too of those who

have treated me as friends, have smiled at my passion, and never believed in the existence of error ; —I will not call it vice, for it was not vicious in principle. I do not wish to defend my conduct, nor to uphold my virtue ; but I must naturally feel inclined to excuse, as far as I can, my deviation from the path which Plato directs us to follow.”

“ The philosophy of Plato was well adapted to make proselytes among the relaxed Greeks, to whom his theory was intended to apply ; but Reginald is not a Platonist, nor do I think you are.”

“ You consider me then an apt scholar for one who founds his practice upon Aristotle and Anacreon, and who would wish, like Epicurus, to taste of all the pleasures life can afford ?”

“ There is one pleasure which Epicurus thought least of, and which I prize the most ; but, if I venture to speak my mind, I shall be rebuked. I have dried up the fountains of those lovely eyes ; I have cheered that drooping heart ; I have resuscitated the spirit of the enterprising female

who joined the secret council which determined on the destruction of Louis of Bavaria; and ——”

“ Well, well;—but tell me, Pierre! tell me, what are those prospects to which you alluded?”

“ My youth at present prevents my filling the papal chair; but an astrologer, the most renowned of his day, prophesied I should one day wear the triple crown. You hinted at the same fortune: John has added a third crown to the presentment; and though I cannot succeed him, be assured, I shall hereafter sit on his throne, and then the millions which I know he is collecting shall be lavishly distributed. In the mean time, you may remember that I have a promise of the first vacant archbishopric; the Regent intends to make me a peer of Parliament, and keeper of the seals. With these prospects before me, I feel doubly animated by the idea that it was you, Cecile, who inspired the Abbot of Fecamp; it was you who animated him to fresh exertions; it was you who taught him lessons of prudence; and, lastly, it is you who must seal his fate, by making

him the most enraptured and devoted of your admirers."

"You promise largely, my friend, and you speak confidently: for all these future prospects I am to sacrifice Reginald?"

"It will be no sacrifice; it will be but justice to yourself. Admit me to a place in your confidence, and I leave the rest to your discretion."

It is said, that the woman who hesitates is lost. Cecile hesitated. "Well, well," said she, at length, "depart! I will dress myself, and write to Reginald in such a tone as will leave him master of his own destiny; and I shall have some pleasure in announcing that I am not a portionless, unmarried widow.—Adieu." The bishop reluctantly withdrew.

END OF VOL. II.

